

Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal
Winter 1998 Vol. 70, No. 1



About the Cover Art

"Transcontinental Telegraph Lines"

William H. Jackson (1843-1942) was a pioneer of the American West. His contributions range from service with the U. S. Geological Survey to participation in the establishment of Yellowstone and Mesa Verde National Parks. Jackson's art and photography have memorialized the West. The work documented, for the first time, the irrepressible beauty of the western landscape. This particular piece by Jackson illustrates the evolution of the West as well as his interpretation of the construction of the transcontinental telegraph. The painting was done in 1933. More of Jackson's work can be seen at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, in an upcoming exhibit of his work, "Through the Lens and Brush." The cover painting is courtesy of the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. --Pedro E. Fornes

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Wyoming Memories

The following segments were drawn in 1983 from the oral history collection held by what was then the Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department, now part of the Cultural Resources Division, State Department of Commerce. At the time these were compiled, the state collection totaled some 700 individual oral history interviews. The collection since has grown to triple that number.

Oral History in Wyoming

The actual voices on tape were used in a slide-tape presentation called "Voices from Wyoming's Past."

In an interview made in December, 1971, Charles Lawrence and Jim Dillinger talked to Clare Johnson about what downtown Buffalo looked like in 1897. In this extract, Lawrence talks about Main Street.¹

Interviewer: "Charlie, what were the streets like in those days?"

Charles Lawrence: "The streets were nothing but a dirt road, just a dirt road period and that's all there was to it. There was no sidewalk, no trees, nothing but a dirt road. All of those big trees you see here weren't there. There might have been some of them—a few of them were small trees about four or five feet tall."

Interviewer: "Some of your sidewalks, Charlie, were board sidewalks?"

Lawrence: "Well, as we get on further downtown we have board sidewalks. I don't know as there were any board sidewalks up here or not."

Interviewer: "Charlie, how would the setting of 75 years ago compare with that of today as far as...oh, what could you see down main street 75 years ago?"

Lawrence: "Looking north down Main Street, the first thing you could see was the Episcopal Church from here. And, now at the present time, there are people coming out in cars, and coming out of those residences and going places. It looks as though they've had a convention over here someplace where what used to be the Wright house...."

Helen Oliver of Newcastle, in an oral history interview done by Phil Roberts in 1979, talked about her remembrances of what downtown Newcastle looked like just after the turn of the century.²

Interviewer: "Did Newcastle look pretty much the same downtown?"

Oliver: "Pretty much the same. The main part. Of course, from the railroad tracks there were two or three buildings there and the mill and on from there on out, there was nothing—no houses or nothing."

Interviewer: "The downtown was right there where it is now?"

Oliver: "The Main Street's very much the same. Of course, they've got some false fronts on and so forth. (laughter). And that Antler's Hotel—that's one of the oldest buildings in town."

Interviewer: "Oh, it is?"

Oliver: "It was used by the Cambria Fuel Company for—they had kind of a commissary there, I guess. They sold dry goods and they had offices, before it was a hotel. So that's one of the old ones. And that building on the corner this way across from the Antler, that's an old one, too. That was what they called the Kendrick Block. And, oh, most of those buildings up—but you

¹ Charles Lawrence interview. Oral History interview (henceforth abbreviated as OH) No. 6 (Dec. 4, 1971), Division of Cultural Resources, State Department of Commerce (henceforth abbreviated as DoC).

² Helen Oliver interview. OH-408 (May 7, 1979), DoC.

know, we've had two or three bad fires which would take the whole block almost at a time. Where Penney Store is, Flemings had a hardware store there and that whole block burned one night. And the block across the street from the Antler's Hotel down—that all burned one time."

Interviewer: "Do you remember those fires?"

Oliver: "Oh, yes. And then up the street—up, well, you know, where the laundry—dry cleaners is? There was a building there they called it the 'House of Blazes.' It was a house of ill repute and a saloon down below. And they were having a dance in town that night and they heard the fire whistle blow. My mother had a schoolteacher with her and they lived on the hill where they could see everything. She looked out the window and she said, 'Oh, it's the old House of Blazes.' And Mrs. Burton said, 'It looked like blazes, all right.' So it burned."

Often times, the only way that one can obtain the history of working people is through oral history. Many of them didn't keep diaries or journals and many times newspapers omitted mention of their activities. In the following tape, done in the summer of 1979 in Casper, a long-time Rock Springs resident and Welsh native, Thomas Charles Hearn, talked to Phil Roberts about the early days in the mines and the strikes in the 1920s.³

Interviewer: "Did you ever have—were there any strikes in the mines when you were there?"

Hearn: "Oh, yes. Even in 1922 when I was paying for this home, we went out on strike. Conditions got so bad that—and coal operators wouldn't settle. I don't know why they wouldn't settle. Because there was a demand for coal. I will say this about a strike. Both sides lose in a strike. So we went back to work after being out for five months under the same conditions as we started and we couldn't get any satisfaction from the mine operators, so we had to go back to work. But then in 1945 we were out on strike three times in one year. And that was when John L. Lewis was fighting to compel the operators to pay so much into the miner's welfare, which they are doing today."

A more familiar theme of conflict in the history of Wyoming was that between sheepmen and cattlemen. In the following interview done in the summer of 1980 in Worland, Ethel Townsend talks about her recollections of the sheep and the cattle disturbances at the turn of the century.⁴

Townsend: "Of course, that stirred up a lot of—why, people who were friends, if they were in sympathy with the sheep, they were no longer friends."

Interviewer: "Do you remember who brought the first sheep into this area?"

Townsend: "I kind of believe it was Joe Allemand. I'm not sure. You say it was? I kind of think it was. Joe and Jack Allemand had sheep. They were up on Spring Creek. And then, of course, there were quite a few sheep that came into that part of the country, but we didn't have them down Ten Sleep for a long time. But I have been several places where I worked—I've always had to work for a living—I've seen crowds of men gather getting ready to go and raid those sheep camps. And they'd run the sheep over the banks, and pile them up and kill a lot of them. And, of course, they didn't kill any men for a long time but they finally did. I think the worst raid—we lived right at Ten Sleep then—was when they killed Joe Allemand, Joe Emge and a French young fellow up there by Spring Creek."

Fannie Chamberlain of Cokeville talks about one of her neighbors who, at the turn of the century, had interests in cattle and sheep. This interview was made in 1971.⁵

Chamberlain: "He told us down there one night at the table that he used to have cattle, but he couldn't round them up. But he said he did round them up because when he got out to round them up on foot, they all took in after him and he had to herd all of them...he had the herd all rounded up. So he sold his cattle and went into sheep and, I think, the first time that he came here, I think, he had 28 head of...or 28 bands. Of course, there was no reserve here then and you could look out on the west side and sheep—the hills were moving with sheep. They could just go anywhere and everywhere. But up until that time you could look over on the west side and it looked just exactly like a green velvet carpet over there. But it didn't take long for the sheep to kill it out."

Kleber Hadsell of Carbon County made this oral history tape sometime around 1972. Hadsell was an early resident of Carbon County and he talked about his experiences with sheep, cattle and the deadline.⁶

³ Thomas Charles Hearn interview, OH-420 (July 10, 1979), DoC.

⁴ Ethel Townsend interview, OH-638 (June, 1980), DoC.

⁵ Fannie Chamberlain interview, OH-19, (Nov. 2, 1971), DoC.

⁶ Kleber Hadsell interview, OH-30A&B, (1972), DoC.

Hadsell: "Oh, sheep were supposed to stay on the south side of that line and the cattle, oh, they usually went about where they wanted to. I thought a good deal about that deadline and thought it would be a good idea for me to go over and find out more about it. So I appeared over at old Jessie Johnson's ranch on the north side of the Green Mountains and asked him to ride with me up on the line and so if there were places up there where he particularly wanted me to stay out of, let me know where they were and if there were places where he'd just as soon I'd go on the other side, let me know that.

"..... folks along the Sweetwater. And I had my best friends there. I was called on occasionally by those folks to come over there with sheep whenever they were threatened with sheep from outside...knowing that when the dust all settled, that I'd move on."

Fern Dumbrill talked about when she and her family came to Wyoming just after the turn of the century and settled in southern Crook County. In this 1980 interview, she talked about the move to Wyoming.⁷

Dumbrill: "We didn't have Pullmans or anything like that. It was an emigrant train, too, and you were supposed to take your lunch as much as you could keep, you know—as much as would keep. As we came west it got, you know..."

Interviewer: "Harder and harder?"

Dumbrill: "Yes."

Interviewer: "What did you take to eat?"

Dumbrill: "Well, anything that wouldn't spoil, you know, maybe like cheese, sandwiches, fruit and we could probably get off once in a while..."

Interviewer: "There were places where you could stop and other places where you couldn't?"

Dumbrill: "Uh huh. And when we got to Newcastle, we thought, well, if it looks like this experimental station that they had down there then, you know, it was going to be fine. We had to come up on the local freight from Newcastle. There were just two freights and one going each way, I think, at that time. So we came up on the local freight to Thornton and it looked terrible... It looked worse than anyplace we'd ever gone through."

In an oral history interview made in April of 1972 Magnus Larson of Cheyenne talked about Tom Horn.⁸

Larson: "It's a kind of touchy thing about Tom Horn killing that boy. And people are so set in their ways—

they're so touchy about this thing. About half the people—they're strongly for Tom Horn and say that he never killed the kid. And the other half—and a lot of these children and grandchildren are alive yet—they all take sides. 'Tom Horn killed that boy.' 'Tom Horn never killed him.' I never get into any arguments with anyone. I keep that to myself. When it comes to arguing about Tom Horn, I'm one of the very few alive who knew him personally, maybe the only one. I don't know."

Interviewer: "Where did you know him?"

Larson: "Tom Horn? Through Charlie Dereemer. I was Charlie Dereemer's hired man. He used to come into Cheyenne...and every time we'd come in, Dereemer would take me up to the jail. And I remember the man, the Sheriff Smalley. He's the man that hung Tom Horn, you know. And anytime we'd come in, Dereemer would take me up to the jail and Smalley would bring some chairs and we'd sit outside there and visit with Tom Horn. And I'm just as sure as I'm alive—I'd swear, you know—that Tom Horn never killed that boy, after hearing him explain the whole thing and all the lies that they gave about him. But he had so many people afraid of him because he did kill some people after they drew their gun on him first."

Other famous people are subjects of oral history interviews. Lorenzo Burdett of Evanston, interviewed in 1973, talked about another famous individual in Wyoming history that went on to national prominence.⁹

Burdett: "I might say working for Penney, as we know, James Cash Penney—J. C. Penney—a man that started with nothing, made a fortune, and more friends than the fortune... There was a man that was a man.

Interviewer: "There is no question about that. His number two store, wasn't it?"

Burdett: "Number 1. Oh yes--Kemmerer was number 1...1902. But he worked here at the Evanston store for three years before he opened the Penney's store. He came here and worked for Johnson and Callahan first. Callahan left—he didn't stay very long and Rolland W. Stevens took over. In the meantime, Johnson-Stevens had a wholesale house in Ogden where they got their supplies and they opened this Golden Rule store here in Evanston, and as far as I can remember

⁷ Fern Dumbrill interview, OH-414 (May 9, 1979), DoC.

⁸ Magnus Larson interview, OH-53 (Feb. 17, 1972), DoC.

⁹ Lorenzo Burdett interview, OH-54 (Jan. 9, 1973), DoC.

and figure, Mr. Penney started to work in 1899, here at the Evanston store. Now I was a very good friend of Mr. Penney's and I liked him, talked to him. After I went to work for the railroad, I would even come up to this store knowing that he was coming here to visit. I enjoyed coming up there and just having a conversation with him and talk with him for a little while."

Many persons interviewed for oral history talk about their recollections of coming to Wyoming. Bessie Tillett, an early resident of the Lovell area, interviewed in 1979, talks about when she and her family came to Wyoming from South Dakota.¹⁰

Tillett: "Anyway, we came with the railroad as far as Custer's Battlefield and we wintered there. And then the next spring, we were told about what wonderful country the Big Horn Basin was and open for agriculture. So my dad decided to come to this part of the country and we came in November, 1894. And, of course, this looked like a pretty good place--Lovell--so that was my dad's homestead and mother's desert right and they spent them here, see? And then we lived six years before the Mormon people"

Henry May of Teton County in this interview made several years ago talks about his first year in Jackson Hole in 1896.¹¹

May: "The next day we pulled over from Ditch Creek over onto the Gros Ventre and camped in there and then we came on back and started to make a house. Filed on land and started to build a house on the ranch--on the homestead--see, down next to the butte. So, of course, that winter we didn't have any hay for our stock. We had to go down and put up this slough grass hay north of Jackson here. We all worked together--the whole bunch--the Budges and Allens, and the bunch of us who came from Rockland and took the contract and they put that hay up. I think my father got a dollar and a quarter a day for stacking. And we had iron wheeled wagons then, you know, and nets we would hang the nets out over the baskets and fill them and take them and attach them to a pulley and go up on the scissor derrick and a cable, and so that's where we wintered. We wintered up on the Nelson place just south of Jackson here the first winter--or just north of Jackson, I should say."

George T. Beck, talking to the Park County Historical Society several years ago about his recollections and some of the background of

his father, one of the founders of Cody, talked about when Cody was laid out.¹²

Beck: "Dad said that when he laid out--he was a surveyor. He had been a civil engineer and when he laid out the town of Cody on its present site here, he said he took some sightings on the North Star. You know the North Star makes a little tiny circle and he took some sightings on that North Star long enough so he could get the exact center of the circle made by the North Star. So Cody is supposed to be as near perfectly north and south as he could get it. And he said--perhaps most of you have heard this story and I always like it--he said that when he laid it out, he and Charlie Hayden were running the lines and so forth and Dad had the plat of the city along with him, he laid it down on the ground and put a rock on top of it and they went off, you know, and--to lay out some more lines and he said a little dust devil came along and grabbed a hold of this paper and pulled it out from under the rock and the last thing he saw of it, it was going right up in the sky. He said he always felt that the original plat of Cody was registered with St. Peter. Quite a distinction for our town..."

One of the most controversial incidents in Wyoming history was the so-called Johnson County Invasion. In this particular tape made in 1961, Russell Thorp talked to Lola Homsher about his opinions of the Johnson County War.¹³

Thorp: "Now Mike Shonsey, incidentally, in the course of conversation, I discussed with him the time of the Kaycee fight. He was supposed to have killed one of those men. I asked him about that. He said he wasn't sure if he did it or somebody else. But they say, that the cattlemen went in there and set the buildings afire without giving those men any show whatever. Mike Shonsey assured me that they gave those men every opportunity to surrender which they refused to do. So, of course, they were cattle thieves and there's no question about it. And I am convinced from my personal observations and talking with these men who would--the boys say they would talk to me when they wouldn't anybody else because I happen to know a good deal about it."

Interviewer: "They trusted you."

¹⁰ Bessie Tillett interview, OH-61 (Oct. 21, 1971), DoC.

¹¹ Henry and Hattie May, OH-98 (Feb. 11, 1966), DoC.

¹² George T. Beck, recording of lecture to Park County Historical Society, OH-147 (n.d.), DoC.

¹³ Russell Thorp interview, OH-156 (July 20, 1959), DoC.

Thorp: "And they all were for law and order and frontier justice and I'm a great believer in that although a very distinguished author—or authoress—said she was sick and tired of hearing of frontier justice, but I know if we hadn't had it why, no telling where we'd be. There's a great deal written about the Johnson County Cattle War—or the invasion or whatever you want to call it. But it's admitted it was a failure in many respects. On the other hand, after this was over, the cattle stealing declined very materially."

But oral history doesn't have to be about events that occurred 80 or 90 or 100 years ago. Even incidents in the 1930s and 1940s can be subjects of oral history interviews. In this interview conducted of Mabel Brown in the summer of 1979, she talked about the Depression era around Newcastle.¹⁴

Brown: "After our first child was born, we decided to go back to the ranch. Wes' sister had bought a place that was being lost because of foreclosure of mortgage. Wes' roots were deep in the soil. His folks had homesteaded and were pioneers in the prairie country. So I thought it would be kind of a lark. I'd never slept on a homestead where it was really a place to live. I'd lived in one overnight—had a lot to learn.

We took our savings and bought some second hand farming machinery, took part of the wages in a cow and a calf and moved out to the prairie. We hit bad years...we had seven years with drought and grasshoppers and—but never a crop. It was at the same time they were—rationing—not rationing, putting quotas on the amount of grain you could raise and all. Killing the cattle, butchering them and just leaving them lay.

This I can remember at the oil field. This goes back a little bit and I'm not really in sequence, but when we were driving through the Osage oil field to Osage, the cattle were just lying along the road, burning in the sun, their legs stiff and up in the air...They paid ranchers about \$20-\$25 and then shoot the cattle and leave them lay there. They wouldn't let anybody go and butcher them to use for meat because that would be defeating the purpose of the slaughter of the cattle in

the first place. It was to try to make the price go up and reduce the supply.

Anyway, they did the same way with the wheat. You weren't allowed to plant over a certain acreage and if you had more wheat then—that came up volunteer, you couldn't harvest that because that would, of course, be cutting down on the demand and they would fine you—that you were raising more than you should. But we didn't have that problem for a long time and then one year, we had a beautiful crop—the best crop you can imagine anyplace. Wes went to Sundance and bought a binder and brought it back over home.

It was one of those Wyoming days that could only be in Wyoming—the sky so blue, bright and clear. There was one big white cloud sailing around up there...one of those thunderheads.

I said to Wes, maybe you just better wait until this is over with before—to see what this cloud does. By the time we saw what the cloud did, it was just like the fields had been plowed. Just wiped out. We didn't even unload the binder.

Wes is pretty brave about things. I cried. I wanted him to give up and go from the farm. I'd had enough. I had lost several children. I thought it was all the farm's fault, you know.

But, he said, 'Oh, we can't quit now, lady. It's like a poker game. We got to stay in and get well.'"

¹⁴ Mabel Brown interview, OH-412 (May 9, 1979), DoC.

This article is a transcription of a special program produced in 1983 by the Historical Research Division, Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department (a successor agency to today's Cultural Resources Division, Department of Commerce). Rick Ewig, presently assistant director of the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, and Phil Roberts, currently editor of Annals and a faculty member of the Department of History, University of Wyoming, produced the program when both were employees of the Historical Research Division.

Wanted—by Whom?

Ben Mills as Indian Agent

By Martin Luschei



*Group of U. S. Commissioners and Indian Chiefs, Fort Laramie, Wyoming, 1868
L-R: unidentified; Packs his Drums, Ogalala Sioux (sitting); John Finn; Amos
Bettelyon; W. H. Bullock (sitting); Old Man Afraid of his Horses; Benjamin Mills
(sitting); Red Bear; James Bordeaux. Courtesy of the Bureau of American Eth-
nology, photo in the collections of the Wyoming State Museum*

In 1870, when he finally agreed to go on the reservation, the powerful Lakota warrior Red Cloud laid down his terms: he wanted W. G. Bullock for his trader and Ben Mills for his agent.¹ “Colonel” Bullock was a civilian, a Virginia gentleman well known around Fort Laramie and often mentioned in accounts of the time. Married to a great-great-niece of George Washington, famous for his egg-nogs, he lived on post and mingled freely with the officers and their wives. But who was Ben Mills?

¹James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 109 (page citations are to the 1975 Bison reprint).

Benjamin Buckner Mills, in the denigrating language of the day, was a “squaw man,” a white man married to an Indian woman. What was undoubtedly a common view of such men was voiced by Dr. Valentine T. McGillicuddy, who upon becoming agent at Pine Ridge promptly became nemesis to Red Cloud, as Red Cloud soon was to him. Testifying out of the hearing of Red Cloud’s people in 1883, McGillicuddy unburdened himself on what he saw as the major underlying difficulty: a class of men who made his task all but impossible:

These Indians, sitting in general council, half the time do not know what they are talking about. They are as a rule giving voice to the advice given them by white men and squaw-men. . . . The squaw-men realize that as soon as the Indians become self-supporting they will have to support their squaws, just as if they were married to white women, and it has been my experience that the squaw-men are opposed to everything like advancement, and do not want to work; they have taken up with the squaws, and come here because too lazy to work in the East, or they have escaped justice.²

A damning picture, indeed. Red Cloud had a view equally as unflattering of the men being dispatched from the East to manage affairs with the Indians, and he had ample reason to expect that his choice of agent and trader would be honored. He had just returned from a triumphal trip to the East where he had been lionized in New York. His view of the new breed had been quoted in the *Times*:

I was brought up among the traders, and those who came out there in the early times treated me well and I had a good time with them. They taught us to wear clothes and to use tobacco and ammunition. But, by and by, the Great Father sent out a different kind of men; men who cheated and drank whisky; men who were so bad that the Great Father could not keep them at home and so sent them out there.³

Behind this exchange of compliments a small drama played out, unobserved by the *Times*, an episode that tells a good deal about the values and attitudes of the moment, and the workings of government policy where Indians were concerned. Considering Red Cloud’s prestige and his repeated demands for Mills as his agent, not to mention the considerable dust he was capable of stirring up, the question arises: why was Mills *not* appointed? The question calls for a closer look. But first a brief note about the man himself. Who was Ben Mills, and why did Red Cloud want him for his agent?

For fifteen years Mills was a familiar figure in the sutler’s store at Fort Laramie. Beginning in 1856 as a clerk, he advanced to trader and then to bookkeeper. His assistant bookkeeper, Gibson Clark, went on to become Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court. A successor as clerk, John Hunton, was to become known as the sage of Fort Laramie. B. B. Mills, on the other hand, seems to have been a shy or self-effacing man who preferred to remain in the background.

On at least one occasion, he failed. In one of the most widely published photos taken at Fort Laramie during the treaty negotiations of 1868 (left), Mills appears, usually unidentified, between two standing warriors, Old Man Afraid of His Horses and Red Bear. A bearded man in his thirties, he sits facing the morning sun, his eyes shaded by a narrow-brimmed hat, left leg crossed over right, the light glancing off the sole of his boot. To his left, shaking hands with Red Bear, stands trader James Bordeaux, one of the best-known figures around the fort. To his right sits Colonel Bullock. With Laramie Peak looming behind him, Mills faces the east, a certain jauntiness in his look, as if to say he’s made it this far west and here he’s going to stay.

His origins remain mysterious. The 1860 census gives his age as twenty-six, his birthplace as Michigan. By 1870 he was claiming Kentucky as his birthplace and 1832 as his date of birth.⁴ Whatever the case, in 1856 he appeared at Westport, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City. A document dated October 7, signed by Robert C. Miller, Indian Agent, grants “Benjamin B. Mills” permission to trade with the “Camanche, Kiowa & Appacha” Indians on the Arkansas River and with “the Cheyennes & Arapahoes on the South Platt & Republican Fork.”⁵ No mention is made of the North Platte or the Lakotas of the Fort Laramie region. Yet ten weeks later Mills had made his way to Fort Laramie, where he signed as a witness to a license for William Guerrier to trade with the Lakotas, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes in the vicinity of the fort.⁶

In November 1857, Seth E. Ward was appointed post sutler at Fort Laramie by Agent Thomas S. Twiss and authorized to employ B. B. Mills as trader along with Antoine Janis and William Guerrier. Early in 1858 Guerrier was killed by the explosion of a keg of pow-

² Olson, 293.

³ Olson 113.

⁴ U.S. Census Records, Fort Laramie National Historic Site.

⁵ Hunton file, folder #1, Cultural Resources Division, Wyoming Department of Commerce, Cheyenne.

⁶ Affidavit by Thomas S. Twiss, Indian Agent Upper Platte, December 20, 1856. Fort Laramie National Historical Site. Name erroneously given as Guernier.

der he was hauling, whereupon Mills and Janis managed the Indian trade.⁷

Through all the forty years of its military history, notes Merrill J. Mattes, the sutler's store was the busiest place at Fort Laramie, not only a vital supply link on the great wagon road west but also "a focal point of social intercourse for all classes of men in the melting pot of frontier society." Colonel Bullock presided over the place with gentlemanly Virginia manners and hospitality. A colonel's wife, delighted with the atmosphere, observed that his clerks attended courteously to white and Indian alike and seemed "equally ready and capable, talking Sioux, Cheyenne, or English, just as each case came to hand."⁸

One consequence of this intermingling was that Ben Mills met and married Sally No Fat, a woman of Red Cloud's band. Their first child, Emma, was born in 1860, their second, Thomas, in 1863. The ledgers of the post trader reflect the domestic activity. In September of 1866, about the time another daughter, Anna, arrived, Mills bought four yards of flannel and ten of calico, then twenty more of calico a week later. In October he purchased ninety pounds of bacon and an axe handle.⁹ The family did not live at the fort itself, as did Colonel Bullock, but most likely at the camp a mile or so away with other families of white men married to Indian women.

In the fall of 1867, with his family continuing to expand, Mills built a two-room log cabin a little over three miles west of the fort—the first house in the valley.¹⁰

The foregoing signs would appear to be unmistakably those of a settler and family man. Though to date we cannot be certain where he came from or just why he came west, Mills was clearly an enterprising young man. Perhaps driven from home by a harsh parent or mean circumstances, or by the misfortune of being a younger son where only the eldest could inherit a foundation to build on, he may simply have been lured, like so many young men, by the promise of a continent unfolding to the west. In his portfolio he surely carried some education and the aptitude to make him a good clerk, distinguishing marks among men who were often barely literate, even unsure how to spell their own names.

The post had its own social order, segregated by station. At the top sat the officers' wives, a tiny group numbering eleven in 1864, women bored and starved for society, enduring the privations of frontier life. Below them came the laundresses and seamstresses, uneducated European immigrants with quarters on

"Soapsuds Row" who enjoyed the attentions of the enlisted men—even marriage, on occasion. At the bottom, of course, came the Indian women of "Squaw Town," presumably the place Mills and his family had been living, a community set off by a decent mile, upstream from the fort.¹¹

Clearly, a fundamental reason that Red Cloud wanted Ben Mills for his agent was that he knew and trusted Mills—a relative. He had the best of reasons for distrusting an agent he did not know: corruption in the Indian agencies had become notorious. None other than Robert Campbell, himself one of the founders of what became Fort Laramie, addressed the topic:

A new crop of Indian agents, have recently been sent to the plains &c,—a majority of whom seem to think that instead of being a check on the traders, they should participate in the profits! . . . [They] have frankly stated that they did not accept the office of Indian Agt. for the paltry salary, and openly intimated they *intended to make more out of it*.¹²

So Red Cloud's suspicions were founded in experience close at hand. But Red Cloud would not be making the appointment.

Under the new peace policy he had adopted from the Quakers, the newly elected President Grant had launched an idealistic experiment. An Indian agent after 1840 was called upon to serve as

a military liaison officer, a policeman, an educator, a purchaser and distributor of huge amounts of food, and a banker who dispensed annuity funds. . . . [Such an assignment] became a ripe plum in the spoils system. For the weak and dishonest it was a wide-open opportunity for quick wealth; for the honest man, it was an impossible job.¹³

⁷ Agnes Wright Spring, "Old Letter Book Discloses Economic History of Fort Laramie, 1858-1871," *Annals of Wyoming* 13 (October 1941): 242n. Transcribed and edited from the letters of W. G. Bullock.

⁸ "The Sutler's Store at Fort Laramie," *Annals of Wyoming* 18, no.2 (July 1946): 121, 106, 109.

⁹ Post trader ledgers of Seth Ward, 1866, 44, Fort Laramie National Historical Site.

¹⁰ John Hunton, "Early Settlement of the Laramie River Valley," Torrington, Wyoming, 1927. Unpublished manuscript in the collections of Fort Laramie National Historical Site.

¹¹ Remi Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 151-153 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹² Nadeau, 161. The example of John Loree, agent for the Upper Platte from 1862 to 1864, recounted in the following pages, is instructive and to the point.

¹³ Robert H. Keller, Jr., *American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy, 1869-82* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 10.

A great deal was seen to be riding on the Peace Policy. An Episcopal bishop from New York saw the very principles of Christianity facing a supreme test among 'the painted Dakota and the murderous Modoc.'¹⁴

In the spring of 1870, with the Peace Policy still in its infancy, Red Cloud let it be known he wanted to visit the Great White Father in Washington, to talk about the Treaty of 1868 and possibly about going on a reservation. Early in June he was welcomed to the White House, where he was greeted by officials from President Grant down to Felix Brunot, chairman of the newly established Board of Indian Commissioners, a board of distinguished civilians designed to supervise relations with the Indians—and to restore public confidence in the Indian service. Red Cloud voiced his insistence upon Mills directly to Jacob D. Cox, Secretary of the Interior, who said he would write down the names of men the Indians wanted for agent and trader and assured Red Cloud that Brunot would soon be sent west to visit the Indians and to make sure that those appointed would be good men, and men who could be trusted by the government.¹⁵

Late in the summer Brunot left for the West, accompanied by Robert Campbell, a fellow commissioner on the board. Their recommendations would play a decisive role in the appointments to be made by the Secretary of the Interior. Campbell, by this time, had become one of the wealthiest businessmen in St. Louis, but he probably knew the West as well as anyone in all that country. At twenty-one he had joined a party of trappers led by Jedediah Smith. At thirty he had supervised the construction of Fort William, the forerunner of Fort Laramie. Known and loved by mountain men throughout the West, he was warmly received on this occasion by both whites and Indians.¹⁶ "Anywhere on the frontier," writes one historian, "among Indians or whites, his credit was considerably better than that of the government of the United States."¹⁷

The Fort Laramie the two of them would find had undergone change. Two years earlier, during the negotiations over the treaty of 1868, Colonel Bullock had written Campbell that he might be ending his trading business: the Indian Commission was 'endeavoring to take all the whites and Indians out of this country preparatory I presume to *abandoning* the post.'¹⁸ Foreseeing the possibility, he formed a partnership with Ben Mills that year and went into the cattle business. Mills quit work in the store, moved his family into the log house he had built, and went to Kansas and Missouri and bought 250 milk cows, which he located on the Laramie River near his house, a herd of beef cattle, the

basis for the famous "SO" brand.¹⁹ In the census of 1870, he gave his occupation as stock dealer.

When Brunot and Campbell finally connected with Red Cloud at Fort Laramie in October 1870, Campbell told the chief they had come as friends and asked for assurances Red Cloud would protect the traders who would be sent out. Emphatically he said that though he could not say who they might be, Red Cloud should try them; he would find them "all right." The commissioners were depending on Red Cloud "to do all that [was] right. . . . [Campbell] hoped they would continue to hear good reports from him and his people so that they could tell the Great Father they were doing what was right."²⁰

Campbell returned to St. Louis and wrote Commissioner of Indian Affairs Eli S. Parker recommending Ben Mills be appointed. Noting that Brunot, too, considered Mills "the best qualified of any man in *that country* for the position," and that Red Cloud threatened to drive any other appointee out of the country, he affirmed that Mills was a man "well spoken of by all the officers and residents at Fort Laramie." He believed Mills could "exercise a good influence over the Sioux Indians which a stranger could not."²¹

Brunot had his own agenda, one in closer harmony with prevailing sentiments in the East. His task, as he saw it, was tremendous: "There was a race to civilise, there were agents to humanize, and there was a great nation to educate in the principles of Christian love toward an oppressed and heathen race."²² A prominent Philadelphia businessman and philanthropist, he was

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ Olson, 96-113; *New York Times*, June 11 and 12, 1870.

¹⁶ Spring, 240.

¹⁷ Harvey L. Carter, "Robert Campbell," in *Trappers of the Far West*, ed. Leroy R. Hafen (Glendale, California: A. H. Clark, 1938; Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 308 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

¹⁸ Bullock to Campbell, May 13, 1868, in Spring, *Old Letter Book*, 258.

¹⁹ John Hunton, "Scraps of History," to Mrs. Cyrus Beard, March 7, 1928, Hunton File, manuscript 479B, Folder #4, Cultural Resources Division, State Department of Commerce; *John Hunton's Diary*, ed. L. G. Flannery (Lingle, Wyoming: Guide Review, 1956), entry for June 25, 1877, Part Two, 230.

²⁰ Brunot and Campbell, *Appendix to Second Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for 1870* (Washington, 1871), 67, 71.

²¹ Campbell to Parker, October 27, 1870, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received, Upper Platte Agency, M-234, Roll 895.

²² Charles Lewis Slattery, *Felix Reville Brunot* (London and Bombay: Longmans, Green and Company, 1901), 147.

deeply committed to the crusade. A sample of the prayer he offered in opening the council with Red Cloud at Fort Laramie, with the principal chiefs in attendance as well as a large assemblage of Oglalas and residents and visitors to the post, reveals the fervor he brought to the task:

We beseech Thee to bless the efforts of Thy servants who are here in their behalf to promote peace and friendship with the aborigines of this land. May our words and counsels be tempered with wisdom; may the hearts of these Indians be made sincere, and their words truthful, and may savage warfare cease. Grant that they may be led into the way of peace and civilization, and in Thy own time may these heathen be claimed for the inheritance of our Lord and Saviour.²³

Brunot considered himself a genuine friend of the Indians. He spent three or four months each summer visiting the tribes where they lived. His biographer, who thought him a great man, judges that he devoted virtually all his time for five years to this work.²⁴ For a month Brunot weighed his decision. On November 10, in a letter to Commissioner Parker, he recommended for the appointment of Bullock as trader and *against* the appointment of Mills as agent. It was proper to say, he wrote, that Campbell favored appointing Mills as agent but, adding that Mills had "an Indian wife and half-breed children," that he had concluded that Mills was "too nearly on a social level with the Indians." It was said that formerly Mills had been "intemperate," but that he had been "steady for several years." He was "well spoken of by most persons at the Fort, and [had] the reputation of an honest well behaved man."

Then came the clinching argument,

[He] has too long been identified with [the Indians] and the frontiersmen to have either the capacity or the inclination to do any serious work for the salvation of the Indians. To appoint him agent would it seems to me be a step in the direction of perpetuating past evils.²⁵

A close look at the holograph letter of this

high-minded man raises a chilling possibility. In the first sentence, the word *salvation*, minutely observed in Brunot's handwriting (see below), appears to read *slavation*. A Freudian slip? A telling revelation, if so, of Brunot's shadow side.

In any event, Brunot prevailed. His decision followed close upon, and was reinforced by a new policy for the Indian agencies pushed through Congress in the summer of 1870 by reformers in the East: the agencies were to be allocated among the various Protestant sects, who would name the agents. The Red Cloud Agency was awarded to the Protestant Episcopal Church, which named John W. Wham as agent. Red Cloud was still protesting the whole arrangement the following June when Brunot found it necessary to make another trip to Fort Laramie to fix upon a location for the agency. "I have consulted the Great Spirit," Red Cloud informed the officials present, "and I do not want a strange man for my agent. There are plenty of men who can read and write, who are married to my people, and they can take care of me and my agency."²⁶

The "poor bedeviled Wham," as James C. Olson refers to him, seems to have encountered nothing but trouble. Red Cloud was his greatest headache, of course, but he had difficulties with Brunot, the Governor of Wyoming, even the agent at the Spotted Tail Agency. He was simply not up to the challenge of supervising the agency and "the obstreperous Indians," Olson con-

²³ Brunot and Campbell, *Second Annual Report*, 62.

²⁴ Slattery, 147-148.

²⁵ Brunot to Parker, November 10, 1870, National Archives, RG 75, Letters Received, Upper Platte Agency, M234, Roll 896.

²⁶ Olson, 137.

I do not think it would be best to appoint
Mr. Mills agent. He is too nearly on a social
level with the Indians and has too long
been identified with them and the frontiersmen
to have either the capacity or the inclination
to do any serious work for the salvation
of the Indians. To appoint him agent
would it seems to me be a step in the direction
of perpetuating past evils. And when a

cludes. By fall he had "managed to alienate virtually every man, red and white, with whom he had been in contact."²⁷ At the end of October he was summarily removed.

Would the appointment of Ben Mills have brought different results? We can only speculate. To the extent that knowledge of Red Cloud and his people and the ability to speak Lakota would help, Mills would have enjoyed a major advantage. If trust counts for anything at all, the advantage would have been huge. His handicap would surely have been a potential conflict of interest, making it difficult for him to carry out policies anathema to those under his supervision.²⁸

As for Mills himself, the final chapter of his life is shrouded in obscurity. Another daughter, Lucie, had joined the family in 1868. At some point in 1871, a second son was born. The exact sequence of events is difficult to establish. One story in the family today has it that Sally Bush, as Sally No Fat is listed on the tribal rolls, ran off with another man and left Mills with the children.²⁹ If so, she must have done so after the birth of Ben, Jr., and Mills must have been shattered.

Ben Mills died in the late summer of 1871, probably of the flu or a similar ailment. The grandmother, Sally Bush's mother, went to Fort Laramie and brought the children to the newly established Red Cloud Agency. One family story, difficult to verify, holds that a sister of Ben Mills in Salt Lake City wanted to take the children but that the grandmother refused to give them up. Ben Mills did have a younger brother, Richard, who was living with the family in 1870 and later joined the Gold Rush to Deadwood. Ten weeks after being elected Assessor of Crook City in 1878, he died, "this estimable gentleman," as the press report called him, apparently killed by strong drink.³⁰ He is buried in the potter's field at Mount Moriah.

No one knows with certainty where Ben Mills' grave may be. One possibility suggested is Chugwater, near where he kept what was known as the Ben Mills herd, officially numbered at 400 at the time of his death.³¹ He may have been buried with others just north of the fort, on the site where the post hospital was constructed in 1873, and his remains later moved to make way for the hospital.

Some controversy lingers over his estate, which was administered by Gibson Clark. The Mills children received nothing from it, and suspicion persists that John Hunton "stole" from it, a question that lies beyond the scope of this inquiry, though among his peers Hunton had a reputation for the highest integrity. After Mills

died, Hunton bought out Mills' interest in the Bullock-Mills partnership. In his diary for 1875, he noted that his debts exceeded his worth by some \$7,000 and that he still owed the Mills estate \$900. According to L. G. ("Pat") Flannery, who edited the diaries, Hunton was still having problems with the Mills estate in 1910.³²

Today the Mills family is well known and honored on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Ben, Jr. lies not far from Red Cloud, in the Old Cemetery at Holy Rosary Mission near Pine Ridge. The best known of his descendants is great-grandson Billy Mills, who as a young Marine in 1964 won the ten thousand meter race at the Olympics, the only American ever to have done so, in what one sports writer suggests may have been "the greatest upset of all time."³³ Another great-grandson survived the Bataan Death March. A grandson, commended for heroic service in France in 1944 lost a son of his own in Vietnam.

Ben Mills leaves a family of descendants scattered across the West, engaged in fields of endeavor ranging from teaching to shipbuilding to administration and business, marked by a strong vein of education and service. Surely this little-known, unassuming man would be proud.

²⁷ *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, 132-143, recounts the woes of Agent Wham.

²⁸ The U. S. Foreign Service, it is worth noting, moves officials from place to place frequently to minimize the risk they may come to identify too closely with the nationals of the country to which they are assigned.

²⁹ The author wishes to thank his informants, especially Lucy Mills Hall, granddaughter of Ben Mills, Chester Mills, his grandson, and La Veta Janis Bark, his great-granddaughter, without whose warm interest and help this story could not have been told.

³⁰ *The Black Hills Daily Times*, May 16 and July 31, 1878.

³¹ "Stock Raising on the Plains, 1870-1871," a report by Dr. Silas Reed, First Surveyor General of Wyoming Territory, *Annals of Wyoming* 17 (January 1945), 56.

³² *John Hunton's Diary*, January 1, 1875, 32-35.

³³ Earl Gustkey, "Mills' Miracle," *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1994.

Martin Luschei, Professor of English at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, spent his early years in and around the Black Hills. He heard his first stories from his grandfather, a pioneer merchant in Gordon, Nebraska, who traded with Lakota people from the Pine Ridge Reservation. After 30 years of teaching American literature in California, he still traces his roots to that part of the country. This is his first venture into historical writing.

Music as Artifact: The Johnson County War Ballads

By Ariel A. Downing

The Johnson County Cattle War of 1892 was one of the most bitter of the 19th century range wars between settlers, who "nested" near prime watersheds, and large landowners, who favored the ways of the open range. The conflict is certainly a milestone in the history of the region, for it marks the end of the open range era and the establishment of the smaller, independently owned ranches which lend the area much of its cultural identity even today. The discord has long been a topic of local and regional historical interest and its events have been preserved in both aural and written traditions, including several songs. Ballads about the Johnson County War are an important part of the folk music history of the Powder River Basin. This article is concerned with four broadside ballads dating from the last decade of the nineteenth century.¹

Although the focus of this essay is on the Johnson County War ballads themselves, a brief overview is necessary in order to understand the historical perspective from which these songs emanate. Readers who wish to make an in-depth study are advised to consult the many published sources documenting the subject, a few of which were actually written by the participants themselves.

The Johnson County War had many causes. In some respects, the conflict was a confrontation between "haves" on one side and "have nots" on the other.² Substantial tracts of land were owned by large cattle companies often funded by wealthy English and Scottish

investors, who functioned as absentee landlords in Johnson County. Most of these landowners and their ranch managers assumed that public land was available for their use. Opposing the "white caps," as the press termed the ranch owners and their foremen, were the so-called "rustlers," the small landowners, who believed just as emphatically that public land was available to them for homesteading purposes. These individuals settled in the same area and often fenced off prime grazing land and water-holes.

Another factor was a combination of poor range management and the capriciousness of Wyoming's weather: at a time when the range was in extremely poor condition from over-stocking and over-grazing, the disastrous winter of 1886-1887 intensified the competition

¹ C. Malcolm Laws stated: "A ballad is a narrative folk song which dramatizes a memorable event." Laws, *Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and a Bibliographical Syllabus*. (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1964), 2. The Johnson County War was certainly one of the most noteworthy events in the history of the state of Wyoming. Broadside ballads are stories in rhyme about an actual occurrence. The term originally referred to "a single sheet: cheaply printed and sold for a small price: often with woodcut illustrations" *Ibid.*, 55. Today it is used to mean any specific historical event commemorated in song, however transmitted. A modern ballad has also been composed about the event. Chris LeDoux's "Johnson County War," can be heard on his album *Powder River*, (American Cowboy Songs, Inc., 1989). LeDoux's song is comprehensive in scope and well-written, but is outside the range of this article on nineteenth-century Johnson County War songs.

² Mark Harvey, "A Civil War in Wyoming: A Centennial Commemoration of the Johnson County War" (master's thesis, University of Wyoming, 1992), 3.

for good pasture land. Several cattle barons, as the owners of the large companies were also called, were forced into bankruptcy. Further, the harsh winter and the resulting die-off of livestock left many cowboys unemployed. Some began to fend for themselves by filing claims on small homesteads.³ The settlers continued to fence off even more pasture land, denying its use to the remaining large outfits.

The maverick problem only worsened the situation. A maverick is an unbranded calf whose mother cannot be located, and the difficulty lay chiefly in determining ownership. Some ranchers reckoned their livestock by a theoretical "book count" instead of an actual tally made on the range, a method which only worsened the maverick problem. Because they had such vast herds, owners of large outfits believed unmarked calves were their property and regarded branding orphaned calves as the equivalent of thievery. These cattlemen actively suspected a few of their employees and some settlers of "mavericking" to increase their herds. The ranchers took their grievance to the territorial legislature, from whence came the largely ineffective Maverick Law of 1884. The bill attempted to solve the problem by simply making all unbranded calves the property of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA), an organization to which a majority of the large ranch-owners belonged.⁴ Poor wording and unenforceability of the Maverick Law was another underlying cause of the Johnson County War.

Since recourse to law enforcement had failed to resolve the grievances of either side, the already tense situation continued to deteriorate. The cattlemen came to regard the settlers, some of whom had been well-respected former employees, with the same suspicion and contempt as common outlaws. A primary example of the cattlemen's turnabout of esteem was Nate Champion, a cowboy who worked for the Bar C and EK Ranches, chiefly as a wagon-boss.⁵ He was once described by several cattlemen as a top hand and a man of trust." Although he was "never accused of rustling... while alive," Champion was eventually black-balled and became one of the fallen heroes of the Johnson County War.⁶

As a result of these circumstances, relations between cowboys who worked for the cattle barons and the small ranchers were at their worst from roughly 1887 through 1892. Like most conflicts resulting in violence and bloodshed, participants on both sides of the Johnson County War were firmly convinced they were right. Incidents leading to the cattle war began in November, 1891, when Orley "Ranger" Jones, was ambushed at

Muddy Creek, south of Buffalo. Shortly thereafter, John A. Tisdale was shot in the back at what is now called Tisdale Divide, also south of Buffalo. Both men were settlers and former cowboys; both were suspected of stealing livestock, although such allegations were never proved. An investigation into these deaths by Johnson County Sheriff's deputies was inadequately conducted and the murders were never officially solved, even though there were witnesses to the crime and an alleged perpetrator was identified.⁷

Both sides organized themselves to pursue their interests more aggressively. In late October, 1891, a group of small-scale stockmen met in Buffalo to organize the Northern Wyoming Farmers and Stock Growers' Association to solidify their cause.⁸ The large land-owners had already formed the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, which met at the exclusive Cheyenne Club in Wyoming's capital city. There they made a decision that some kind of action had to be taken to protect their interests in northern Wyoming. They drew up a list of about seventy five settlers and others whom they wished to eradicate, hired several Texas gunfighters and formed a small private army, led by Major Frank Wolcott, U.S. Army, retired. On April 5, 1892, a special train left Cheyenne headed for Casper, from where the invaders planned to ride north to kill the men on the "daisy" list and burn their property.⁹

Wyoming's governor, senator, congressmen, judges, and, in general, district law enforcement were probably aware of the cattlemen's plans, but looked the other way, for the actions of the vigilante army were in the best interest of these powerful individuals who held or controlled most of the offices in the state government during the 1880s and '90s.

On the way, the leaders of the party, Major Wolcott and Frank Canton, argued about the best way to carry

³ Harvey, 27.

⁴ Helena Huntington Smith, *The War on Powder River*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 59-61.

⁵ Combinations of letters such as Bar C, EK and others are transliterations of brands used by ranch owners to identify ownership of their livestock.

⁶ Harvey, 88.

⁷ Down through the years, legend has it that former Johnson County sheriff Frank Canton, who worked as a stock detective for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and as a trusted foreman for one of the big cattle companies, was the gunman who ambushed Tisdale and Jones in a draw south of Buffalo; however, no charges were ever formally filed. Robert K. DeArment, *Alias Frank Canton*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

⁸ Harvey, 39.

⁹ Smith, 188.

out their mission. The original plan called for a direct attack on Buffalo, but, when the party stopped to rest at the TTT Ranch, south of present-day Kaycee, word reached Major Wolcott that many of the alleged rustlers were spending the winter at the nearby KC Ranch. Against Canton's advice, Wolcott ordered the army to make a detour in order to kill the supposed gang of cattle thieves. At dawn on April 9, the invaders attacked the cabin where only two men, Nate Champion and Nick Ray, had been spending the winter months. Champion and Ray were killed and the cabin was set on fire. At the height of the fracas, a settler by the name of Jack Flagg and his step-son Alonzo Taylor happened to drive by in a buggy. Shots were fired at them, whereupon they cut their team loose and rode to Buffalo, to warn the citizenry and local officials of the impending confrontation.

Buffalo had already become polarized because of the events of the preceding winter, but after Flagg's warning, the town became a hornet's nest of cowboys, settlers and townsfolk. Several citizens armed themselves and rode to the Covington Ranch, a few miles southeast of town.¹⁰ From there they besieged the invaders who had taken refuge in the house and outbuildings at the neighboring TA Ranch. On April 12, Governor Amos W. Barber, who was firmly on the side of the invaders, wired United States President Benjamin Harrison requesting Federal troops to quell an "insurrection" existing in Johnson County.¹¹ The cavalry, posted at Fort McKinney, west of Buffalo, rode to the TA Ranch. Major Wolcott grudgingly surrendered on April 13 and the townsfolk agreed to discontinue the siege.

The cattlemen and their retinue were held for a time at Fort McKinney, then were moved to Fort Fetterman and, finally, to Fort Russell in Cheyenne. Officials believed it would have been impossible to get a fair trial anywhere in northern Wyoming. At a preliminary hearing in Laramie, a change of venue was approved to, of

all places, Cheyenne, from where the invasion had originally been planned. The invaders and the mercenary gun-fighters were released on their own recognizance, and later, on January 21, 1893, the case was dismissed.

The Johnson County War Ballads

Elements were present in the conflict which lend themselves perfectly to folk balladry: intrigue, underhandedness, murder, and no small amount of heroism. These same conditions are present in other well-known American ballads such as "Sam Bass," "Jesse James" and "Pretty Boy Floyd." Four nineteenth-century ballads about the Johnson County Cattle War are extant, two of which remain in the repertoires of a very small number of singers. The only existing tune may or may not be the one which was used during the 1890s, while tunes for the other songs have been lost. All four texts are concerned with describing the trials and heroism of a few men, presumably for the purpose of swaying or reinforcing public sentiment toward the settlers. Even their enemies acknowledged that protagonists such as Nick Ray and Nate Champion were brave men. Such heroism is the stuff of which legends are made; unsurprisingly, not long after the uprising, ballads were composed to honor their memory. The songs are narrated from the point of view of the settlers; unfortunately none exist from the cattlemen's perspective.

¹⁰ A prominent merchant, Robert B. Foote, who was an elderly Scotsman, "mounted his celebrated black horse, and with his long white beard flying to the breeze, dashed up and down the streets calling the citizens to arms . . . to protect all that you hold dear against this approaching foe." Asa Shinn Mercer, *The Banditti of the Plains*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 83-85. According to less impassioned reports in the local press, the old man rode up and down roaring, "Come out, you so-and-sos, and take sides." Smith, 214.

¹¹ Smith, 183.

The Johnson County War Songs

1. "The Ballad of Nate Champion"

Anonymous, early 1890s. Variants found in: Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads*, 1958, 175-177 (text & tune).

"Blood Stained Book," tape recording, sung by Daniel L. Devoe; Johnson County Public Library Music Files.

2. "The Invasion Song"

Anonymous, early 1890s. Variants found in: Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads*, 1958, 172-174 (text only).

Tape recording, sung by Daniel L. Devoe; Johnson County Public Library Music Files.

3. "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones"

Patrick Burns, 1892; Johnson County Public Library Music Files (text only).

4. "Our Heroes' Grave"

Anonymous, early 1890s; Johnson County Public Library Music Files; also in the American Heritage Center Archives, University of Wyoming, Laramie (text only).

"The Ballad of Nate Champion"

Malcolm Laws emphasizes that "American ballads leave relatively little to the imagination. They are explicit and detailed, often tiresomely so."¹² One Johnson County War ballad, "The Ballad of Nate Champion," also known as "The Ballad of Nick and Nate," "The Little Black Book," "The Little Blood-Stained Diary" and "The Blood-Stained Book," is certainly a case in point, for it is a detailed summary, leaving virtually nothing to conjecture, of an event which was probably the turning point of the entire conflict.

The anonymous text describes the chain of events in Champion's diary. The attitude of the author is resigned and somewhat restrained, considering the highly charged emotional events about which he is writing. The opening verse serves as an introduction to the song; it presumes the listeners or readers are familiar with the events described therein. The last verse has a decidedly funereal cast. Descriptions of a deceased person going to heaven using constructs such as the Big Divide and the Home Ranch are typical of cowboy poetry and often symbolize a "reward for loneliness and isolation felt by cowboys."¹³

Complete variants (e.g., with both text and tune) of the folk song are found in only two modern sources: Olive Wooley Burt's book, *American Murder Ballads* and on an audio cassette made by former Kaycee area resident Daniel L. "Lonnie" Devoe, which is now in the collection of the Johnson County Public Library.¹⁴ The texts are similar, but the two tunes are very different.

A possible source for much of the description found in the ballad is a newspaper article which appeared in *The Chicago Herald*. It was written by a journalist named Samuel Travers Clover, who was one of two reporters the cattlemen invited to accompany them. His assignment was to cover the events, ostensibly from the cattlemen's point of view, and report back to Chicago by telegraph.

At the conclusion of the gunfight at the KC Ranch cabin, Frank Canton discovered a small notebook under Champion's body. He and the other leaders of the company read it, after which Major Wolcott gave it to Clover, who then published its contents, a record of the last hours of Champion's life. When Clover saw that the invaders, surrounded at the TA Ranch by angry Johnson County citizens, would have to fight for their lives, he recognized his chance to file a sensational story. He slipped through the lines into the protective custody of the United States Army. A few days



American Heritage Center

Nate Champion

later, again under Army escort, he made his way to Douglas, Wyoming, from where he filed his story.¹⁵ Champion's manuscript, as printed in Clover's article, was in a rather terse prose style, but follows the same narrative line as the text of "The Ballad of Nate Champion," which is, of course, rhymed. (See page 18). A few weeks after the incident Clover evidently lent the diary to a colleague, Henry A. Blair, for the former acknowledged "the return of Champion's diary pages" and added "I shall keep them for as long as I live." The diary has not been seen since.¹⁶

Olive Wooley Burt stated that he collected the text for "The Ballad of Nate Champion" from Leland White

¹² Laws, 9.

¹³ Austin E. Fife and Alta S. Fife, *Heaven on Horseback: Revivalist Songs and Verse in Cowboy Idiom*. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1970), 3.

¹⁴ Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 175.

¹⁵ In addition to the diary, a hand-lettered sign reading "Cattle thieves, beware" was also found on Champion's body. Astonishingly, Smith mentions that "The Chicago reporter did not choose to tell the whole story. It was Clover himself who wrote the sign and buttoned it on the dead man's vest" Smith, 208.

¹⁶ Smith, 208. Over the years, some controversy has arisen about whether Clover really published the substance of the diary which Canton found or was merely indulging in sensationalistic journalism. Harvey noted: "If the diary had been made up by Sam Clover. . . it [is] hard to imagine that Clover, a city-slicker, could have made up a diary that sounded . . . like it was written by a [former] Texas cowboy. Comparing the diary with Champion's oral testimony [at a trial] just a few months before, one has to come to the conclusion that Champion wrote it" Harvey, 100-101. One is probably justified in assuming that the text of Clover's article is closely representative of the actual words Champion wrote in his diary under such harrowing circumstances.

and Archie and Obed Garner, who lived in Afton, Wyoming.¹⁷ The same text is also found in *Powder River, Let 'Er Buck*, by Struthers Burt. The latter stated, "For a while along the Powder the following ballad was popular. No one seems to have the vaguest idea who wrote it or how the tune went. It is a transcription, as it says, a condensed one, of the hour-by-hour diary Nate Champion kept."¹⁸

The song as given in Olive Burt is shown on the preceding page. The tune consists of four phrases to match the quatrain structure of each half-stanza. It is in the mixolydian mode, common to many folk tunes. The melody has a range of one octave and its contour reflects a typical Anglo-American "rainbow" curve, the top of the arch occurring mid-way through the third phrase (measure 11). Like many folk tunes, the chords are simple and fundamental to the scale. The song is in waltz time, which was quite common in popular music of the day, and the rhythmic patterns accommodate the predominantly iambic meter of the text, again typical of many folk ballads.

Some of former Kaycee area resident Daniel L. Devoe's ancestors were involved in the Johnson County War, even though his father, Clark Devoe, did not move to the region until 1906, well after the end of the conflict. Hank Devoe, Daniel's great-uncle, was the foreman of the Bar C ranch; a well-known photograph shows him with the roundup crew of 1884.¹⁹ County records show that another great-uncle, C. M. Devoe, was on the Johnson County Commission at the time of the affray.²⁰

Daniel L. Devoe is a self-taught guitar player who still plays "every once in a while. . . for my own enjoyment, for fun."²¹

DD: A friend of mine showed me a few chords, but I just taught myself.

AD: How old were you when you learned to play?

DD: Oh, I was fourteen when I got my first guitar, but then I was about twenty when I really learned how.

AD: Do you play by ear or read from sheet music?

DD: I play by ear. I don't read music at all.

AD: Did you ever play in a band?

DD: No, I never did. I just played by myself.²²

In February, 1985, he made two cassette tapes of folk and popular songs as a birthday present for his sister, Maggie Firnekas. The tapes contain a great variety of folk, popular, country, cowboy-western and religious music.²³ Devoe also included two Johnson County War songs, "Blood Stained Book" and "The Invasion Song."

Devoe's tune, "Blood Stained Book," is in a major key and makes two arches of unequal length rather than

one symmetrical "rainbow" curve as found in Olive Woolley Burt's variant. The first peaks in measure 3, while the second arch arrives at a high point in measure 6 (*see following page*). In a manner typical of many folk singers, Devoe sustains the long notes of the tune irregularly, making the music subservient to the text and creating an uneven metrical structure. Devoe performs in a manner similar to that of folk singer Woody Guthrie, who also used flexible meters and irregular chord changes.

The textual changes Devoe makes do not generally alter the meaning of the story. Rather, they seem to reflect the way in which he learned and then reshaped the song. Some of the modifications produce contrasting poetic meters, by throwing the text out of the iambic foot and into dactylic or vice versa. In the fourth verse Devoe substitutes the word "nearly" for "now about," which is easier to sing and fits more neatly into the predominant iambic meter. At other times, he has evidently substituted one word for another which perhaps made more sense to him, as in the seventh verse where he has changed "splitting" to "splintering."

¹⁷ O. Burt, 175-177.

¹⁸ Struthers Burt, *Powder River Let 'Er Buck*. (New York: Rinehart and Co., 1938), 297-299. The song text also exists as a typescript copy, located in the Music Files at the Johnson County Public Library in Buffalo, Wyoming. The unknown typist states that he has copied it from Struthers Burt. The same person has added the following anecdote, which is not found in Burt's book: "Concerning the nerve of Nate Champion, this story [was] told to Gray Norval by Al Smith: Al was spending the night in a cabin with Nate. Someone tried to break in the door. Nate raised himself up, took a shot at the door, then put his gun under his pillow and went back to sleep. The next morning spots of blood were seen on the path outside the door."

¹⁹ Harvey, 77.

²⁰ Charles M. Devoe was listed as a county commissioner in a public legal notice printed in *The Buffalo Bulletin* in April, 1892. Amos W. Barber Scrapbook, n.d., 347, Wyoming Stockgrowers Collection, Box 286, American Heritage Center. His descendant Daniel L. Devoe also mentioned that his great-uncle "Charles. . . was marshal in Buffalo for quite a long time in the late 1800s." D. L. Devoe letter to author, 13 November 1996. Which side of the conflict Charles supported is unknown. Helena Huntington Smith described him as an "esteemed early settler and former roundup foreman," and mentioned that he was an acquaintance of Frank Canton, but her statements do not imply that C. M. Devoe's sympathies were necessarily on the side of the invaders. Smith, 171.

²¹ Devoe, interview by author, 21 September 1996.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Copies of both cassette tapes are located in the Johnson County Public Library music files and in the American Music Research Center Archive, Ariel Downing Collection, College of Music, University of Colorado at Boulder.

Nate Champion's Diary*

"Me and Nick was getting breakfast when the attack took place. Two men here with us—Bill Jones and another man. The old man went after water and did not come back. His friend went to see what was the matter and he did not come back. Nick started out, and I told him to look out, that I thought there was some one at the stable who would not let them come back... Nick is shot, but not dead yet. He is awful sick... I must go and wait on him... It is now about two hours since the first shot. Nick is still alive. They are shooting and are all around the house. Boys, there is bullets coming in like hail. Them fellows is in such shape I can't get at them. They are shooting from the stable and river and back of the house.

Nick is dead. He died about nine o'clock. I see a smoke down at the stable. I think they have fired it. I don't think they intend to let me get away this time.

It is now about noon. There is some one at the stable yet; they are throwing a rope out at the door and dragging it back. I guess it is to draw me out. I wish that duck would get further so I can get a shot at him... Boys, I feel pretty lonesome just now. I wish there was some one here with me so we could watch all sides at once... They may fool around until I get a good shot before they leave.

It's about three o'clock now. There was a man in a buckboard and one on horseback just passed. They fired on them as they went by. I don't know if they killed them or not... I seen lots of men come out on horses on the other side of the river and take after them... I shot at the men in the stable just now; don't know if I got any or not...

I must go and look out again. It don't look as if there is much show of my getting away. I see twelve or fifteen men. One looks like (name was scratched out). I don't know whether it is or not. I hope they didn't catch them fellows that run over the bridge toward Smith's... They are coming back. I've got to look out.

Well, they have just got through shelling the house again like hail. I heard them splitting wood. I guess they are going to fire the house to-night. I think I will make a break when night comes if I live . . . Shooting again. I think they will fire the house this time. It is not night yet... The house is all fired. Good-by, boys, if I never see you again." [signed] Nathan D. Champion

*From Samuel Clover, *On Special Assignment: Being the Futher Adventures of Paul Travers, Newspaper Reporter*. (New York: Argonaut Press, 1965), 258-259. The book is a partly fictionalized account of Clover's own adventures as a newspaper correspondent, in which he portrays himself as Paul Travers. Clover used ellipsis markings to indicate the passage of time rather than as editorial deletions. He stated, "The outlaw had deliberately jotted down in the memorandum-book the passing scenes of the last hours of his life..." Clover, 257.

The Ballad of Nate Champion

Anonymous

The musical notation is written on three staves in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are: "It's just a lit - tle blood-stained book, Which a bul - let has". Above the staff, the chord [C] is indicated. The second staff continues the melody. The lyrics are: "torn in two; _____ It tells the fate of Nick and". Above the staff, the chords [G], [C], and [F] are indicated. The third staff continues the melody. The lyrics are: "Nate, Which is known to all _____ of you. _____". Above the staff, the chords [C], [G7], and [C] are indicated. The notation includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and rests.

From Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 175. [Guitar chords added by Ariel Downing].

The Ballad of Nate Champion

It was a little blood-stained book which a bullet had torn in twain,
It told the fate of Nick and Nate, which is known to all of you;

He had the nerve to write it down while the bullets fell like rain,
At your request, I'll do my best to read those lines again.

"Two men stayed with us here last night, Bill Jones and another man,
Went to the river, took a pail, will come back if they can;

I told old Nick not to look out, there might be someone near,
He opened the door; shot to the floor, he'll never live, I fear.

Two hours since the shots began, the bullets thick as hail!
Must wait on Nick, he's awful sick, he's still alive but pale;
At stable, river, and back of me, men are sending lead,
I cannot get a shot to hit, it's nine, and Nick is dead.

Down at the stable I see a smoke, I guess they'll burn the hay,
From what I've seen they do not mean for me to get away;

It's now about noon, I see a rope thrown in and out the door,
I wish that duck would show his pluck, he'd use a gun no more.

I don't know what has become of the boys that stayed with us last night,
Just two or more boys with me and we would guard the cabin right;

I'm lonesome, boys, it's two o'clock, two men just come in view,
And riding fast, as they went past, were shot at by the crew.

I shot a man down in the barn, don't know if I hit or not,
Must look again, I see someone, it looks like . . . there's a blot;

I hope they did not get those men that across the bridge did run,
If I had a pair of glasses here, I think I'd know someone.

They're just through shelling the house, I hear the splitting wood,
I guess they'll light the house tonight, and burn me out for good;

I'll have to leave when night comes on, they'll burn me if I stay,
I guess I'll make a running break and try to get away.

They've shot another volley in, but to burn me is their game,
And as I write, it's not yet night, and the house is all aflame;

So good-bye, boys, if I get shot, I got to make a run,
So on on this leaf, I'll sign my name, Nathan D. Champion."

The light is out, the curtain drawn, the last sad act is played,
You know the fate that met poor Nate, and of the run he made;

And now across the Big Divide, and at the Home Ranch door,
I know he'll meet and warmly greet the boys that went before.

Blood Stained Book

Anonymous
As sung by Daniel L. Devoe

MM ♩ = 102

1a) It's just a lit-tle blood-stained book, which a bul-let had torn in
1b) He had the nerve to write it down, while the bul-lets fell like

two; It tells the fate Of Nick and Nate, which is known to all of
rain; At your re-quest, I'll do my

you.
best to re-peat those lines a - gain.

(1) *Ossia*

- (2) 4/4 in some verses.
- (3) Time signature ranges from 4/4 through 7/4 in various verses.
- (4) The two sixteenth notes g' are sung as one eighth note g' in the second half of each verse.
- (5) Time signature ranges from 4/4 through 6/4 in various verses.
- (6) The D major chord should occur here. The first eighth note d' sung as an eighth note e' in some verses.
- (7) The two sixteenth notes d' are occasionally sung as one eighth note.

"The Invasion Song"

The "Invasion Song" is the only Johnson County War song that is mentioned in G. Malcolm Laws' classic compendium of American folk ballads, *Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and A Bibliographical Syllabus*. It apparently never achieved great popularity, since Laws listed it in Appendix II: Native Ballads of Doubtful Currency in Tradition: "Songs of lesser influence and those which are extinct from the oral tradition."²⁴ Curiously, he classifies it as a cowboy song rather than a murder ballad. Laws states that he found the song text in Olive Wooley Burt's *American Murder Ballads*, and that it is a "ballad printed only once, with little indication of where, when or from whom the singer learned [it]."²⁵

The text and a tune are extant on an audio cassette made by Devoe, who sang both "The Invasion Song" and "Blood Stained Book" to the same tune. Such tune grafting is an excellent example of the dynamic folk music process. Devoe first learned the former song from

his father, Clark Devoe, then learned "Blood Stained Book" many years later when he purchased a copy of Burt's *American Murder Ballads* in a Portland, Oregon, bookstore.

AD: Did those songs catch your eye because you grew up in that same area? [Southern Johnson County.]

DD: That's right. Well, my dad used to sing "The Invasion Song" when I was growing up. He knew that song.

AD: Is that where you learned the tune, from him?

DD: Yes, that's right.

AD: Did you learn the guitar chords from him also?

DD: No, Dad didn't play an instrument. He sang a *cappello* [sic], you might say. He just sang the song.

AD: Did he know the other one? ["Blood Stained Book"]

²⁴ Laws, 260.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 257.

DD: No, I learned it from the book.

AD: Did you use the music [given] there?

DD: No, I can't read a note of music. So I just used the same tune, so I'd have something to sing it to. It's the same tune Dad sang it to.²⁶

"The Invasion Song" must have still been sung in southern Johnson County during the first few decades of the twentieth century, although Devoe remarked that he did not know where his father learned the song.

DD: [Hank and C. M. Devoe] came (to the Kaycee area) some time before Dad did.

AD: Did they know "The Invasion Song"?

DD: Well, I never did hear them sing it, but I don't know if they did or not. Dad had to learn it from somewhere.²⁷

The song presents a broader picture of the events than "The Ballad of Nate Champion," and the text is considerably more emotionally charged. In fact, "The Invasion Song" seems as if it might have been principally intended to influence public sentiment, rather than to describe events and individuals.

The anonymous author leaves absolutely no doubt as to his sympathy for the settlers' cause. He not only related that Nate Champion was dead, he gives a graphic description of the corpse in the third verse. Additionally, he called the cattlemen a "murderous crew" and the hired gunmen from Texas "a gang of hired assassins." Language of this sort is seldom used by an impartial outside observer who is merely telling the story of an event.

Frank Canton is mentioned by name in "The Invasion Song" as the man who led the siege at the KC Ranch cabin, in which

Champion and Ray were killed. Mark E. Harvey described Frank Canton (Joe Horner) as "one of those enigmas of the Old West who lived a dual life of outlaw and lawman—the same vein of mankind which produced ... Tom Horn and Wyatt Earp."²⁸ Canton had a long arrest record in Texas for murder, bank robbery and, ironically, cattle thievery, and had moved to Wyoming to begin a new life.²⁹ Canton himself wrote a fascinating account of the cattle war in his autobiography, one of the few documents which tells the story from

²⁶ Devoe Interview, 21 September 1996.

²⁷ Devoe Interview

²⁸ Harvey, 93.

²⁹ For a recent biography of Canton, see Robert K. DeArment, *Alias Frank Canton*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

The Invasion Song

Sad and dismal is the tale I now relate to you, 'Tis all about the cattlemen, them and their murderous crew.

They started out on their manhunt, precious blood to spill, With a gang of hired assassins, to murder at their will.

God bless poor Nate and Nick, who gave their precious lives, To save the town of Buffalo, its brave men and their wives.

If it hadn't been for Nate and Nick, what would we have come to? We would have been murdered by Frank Canton and his crew.

Poor Nate Champion is no more, he lost his precious life, He lies down in the valley, freed from all care and strife.

He tried to run the gauntlet, when they had burned his home, And Nick was lying lifeless, lips wet with bloody foam.

The run was made; his doom was sealed, a fact you all know well. They left his lifeless body there, on the slope above the dell.

No kindred near to care for him, to grasp his nerveless hand; A braver man was never faced, by Canton's bloody band.

The very next name upon the list, was that of brave Jack Flagg. Frank Canton must have surely thought, That he would 'fill his bag'.

Jack and his stepson came in view, a-riding 'round the curve; "Throw up your hands! By God, they're off!"

Frank Canton lost his nerve

'Red Angus' next, the 'canny Scot,' was marked for Canton's lead. But Angus, warned by bold Jack Flagg, for aid and succor sped.

The countryside now swarmed to life, the settlers armed in haste;

Soon 'Red' had hundreds at his back, who Cantons minions faced.

To Crazy Woman's winding bank, the cowed invaders fled, With KayCee blazing in their rear, and Ray and Champion dead.

Here, held at bay, the cravens halt, 'till soldiers came to aid; And now, secure in jail they rest, the debt of blood unpaid.

Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, 172-174.

the cattlemen's point of view.³⁰ Canton mentions the expiration of Champion, Ray and others but does not claim to have played a role in the deaths which he was alleged to have caused.

Olive Wooley Burt learned of "The Invasion Song" from the same sources as "The Ballad of Nate Champion." The tune to the former song may not have been known to Burt's informants, since the author does not provide a melody.³¹ His informants provided two interesting bits of evidence concerning the song: it was "composed at the conclusion of the trouble in 1892"; and "the verses had been 'made up' by a drunken cowpuncher and set to music by a woman of Buffalo, Wyoming."³² The text may well have been written soon after the surrender of the cattlemen and their mercenaries to the United States Army. The citizens of Johnson County were up in arms at the cessation of the hostilities and public sentiment was clearly divided. If the anonymous author wished to convey his opinion to as many of the townsfolk as possible, the verse might well have been set to a familiar tune by the unknown woman from Buffalo, to be quickly learned by interested parties who were in agreement with the sentiments expressed in the text.

"The Murder of Tisdale and Jones"

Another Johnson County War song is titled "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones," and is extant as a manuscript written on a piece of ruled notebook paper, from which an unknown person has made a typewritten copy; both are located in the Johnson County Public Library Music Files.

A remark added at the bottom of page two of the manuscript has also been preserved on the typescript: "Written and composed by musician Patrick Burns, 8th Infantry, Fort McKinney, Wyoming." The soldiers of the 8th Infantry were apparently well-received in Buffalo, and its "distinguished band, under the skilled leadership of Professor Carlsen" played for many balls and parties held at the post, to which the townspeople were also invited.³³ Such good rapport between the Army post and the town led to an "emphatic if unofficial sympathy with Johnson County, from the commanding officer on down, when the invasion took place."³⁴

³⁰ Frank M. Canton, *Frontier Trails: The Autobiography of Frank M. Canton*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 74-106. Another is John Clay's *My Life on The Range*, (1924, 1962). Clay was a businessman from Scotland who came to Wyoming in the early 1880s. He was not directly involved in the range war, but held high office in the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and was privy to all the policies and decisions which were central to the conflict.

³¹ Burt, 172-174.

³² *Ibid.*, 173. In an interview with a *Billings Gazette* reporter, 78-year-old Kaycee resident T. D. "Bunny" Taylor said he remembered "a couple of songs that folks used to sing [about the Johnson County War]. One, 'Little Black Book,' was about Nate Champion's diary. . . [[and] the other was 'The Invasion Song.' It came later than 'Little Black Book.' They were about the only songs we heard when we were kids." Taylor also conceded that he did not "know much about the events of the war" (quoted in Blair 1992, El). His statement about the historical placement of "The Invasion Song" is based on hearsay. Taylor interview, 30 June 1992. Olive W. Burt gives no information about the background of his informants, making their remarks equally difficult to document. We probably will never know the actual time of composition for any of the nineteenth-century Johnson County War songs.

³³ Smith, 142.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 141.

The Murder of Tisdale and Jones

(A song to the air of "Poor Old Dad")

One night as I sat leisurely by my fireside so bright,
I picked up The Buffalo Bulletin which just fell 'cross my sight.
Of many things I read about, they were different but were true,
While gazing on the columns as I read The Bulletin through,
I read where the supposed rustlers could get no work at all;
The rich men tried to down them, yes, and shove them to the wall;
There is many an honest cowboy that would be glad for work to do.
I said, "God, help the poor man," as I read The Bulletin through.
I next read of the murders of John Tisdale and Jones,

Pierced in the back by bullets while returning to their homes.
They were shot out on the prairie and made the dust to bite,
For afraid the cruel assassin was to meet them in a fight.
Now if Freeman knows the murderer, why don't he come to the front?
And the people down in Buffalo will go out on a hunt.
Their hands may have been bloody to manhood from their youth.
It stood for the law to sentence them when they had learned the truth.

Now Tisdale's wife is living yet and battling on through life.
Who is there to protect her, keep her from care and strife?
When she reached her husband dead, it broke her heart in two.
I cried aloud, "It is a shame," as I read The Bulletin through.
Jones' true love, broken hearted, her grief she could not bide.
When she found that her lover had out on the prairie died.
God pity that young lady, whoever she may be.
She is mourning her young life away while the murderer goes free.

Patrick Burns was also stationed with the cavalry troops at Fort McKinney. As an infantryman, he was probably not directly involved in the surrender and transport of the invaders, but he surely was aware of the activities of his fellow soldiers on the Army post. The sympathies of the author of "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones" were clearly on the side of the townsfolk and small ranchers, and the song is a commentary on the aftermath of the insurrection rather than a description of it. The text is more restrained than "The Invasion Song"; Burns' poetry is not nearly as emotionally charged, yet he is genuinely upset about the recent turn of events and feels sorry for the men who died and for their survivors.

The meter and rhyme of the Burns' poem are highly irregular. The author seems to have almost no awareness of meter and the rhyme scheme is uneven as well. The poem is shown above exactly as found in the Johnson County Public Library manuscript. The first verse contains nine lines, with a rhyme scheme of AA, BB, CC, DD, E. The first line of the second verse rhymes with the last line of the first, producing a seven-line rhyme scheme of E, FF, GG, HH. The third verse has eight lines, all of which are rhymed as regular couplets. Perhaps the author was more interested in the poem's sentiment than in its finesse. The tune suggested in the manuscript is "Poor Old Dad," which may have also been known as "Dear Old Dad." The text scansion and rhyme scheme do not fit "Great Grand-Dad" or its many variants.

"Our Heroes' Grave"

The last, and perhaps most enigmatic, of the nineteenth-century songs about the Johnson County War is "Our Heroes' Grave." The song was printed in *The Wyoming Derrick*, May 12, 1892, exactly one month after the siege at the TA Ranch.³⁵ A manuscript copy, written in the hand of the same person who copied "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones" is located at the Johnson County Public Library. Both the newspaper article and the manuscript indicate that the song was written by Charles Story and "set to music and sung at the indignation meeting at Banner."³⁶ No further mention of music for this text other than the reference to the meeting at Banner has been discovered. Neither the newspaper nor the manuscript give any information about the tune to which it was sung.

The poetry is certainly more sophisticated than that of "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones." The iambic tetrameter of the text flows quite smoothly and the couplets rhyme in a regular order. Although it is written with an elaborate style of expression common to the nineteenth-century, the overall feeling-tone of the text is somewhat reserved, especially when compared to "The Invasion Song." The somber text depicts the event in general terms, rather than focusing on any one aspect of it. The first two stanzas portray Nate Champion's final hours, while the last verse expresses the emotions of people at his funeral.

The poem is meant to be a vehicle of persuasion; sentiment is used to make the readers sympathize with the bravery of the hero and the sorrow of the townsfolk who buried him. Virtually the entire town of Buffalo attended joint services for Champion and Nick Ray, held on April 15, 1892.³⁷ Like "The Murder of Tisdale and Jones," "Our Heroes' Grave" is not in the current

³⁵ *The Wyoming Derrick* was a Casper newspaper published from June 21, 1890 through March 2, 1906. How the poem got from Johnson County (or perhaps Sheridan County) to Casper, which is about 115 highway miles south of Buffalo, is uncertain. The article has been preserved in another source as well, for Governor Amos W. Barber clipped it and pasted it into his scrapbook *Barber Scrapbook*, 347.

³⁶ Barber, 347.

³⁷ Smith, 230.

Our Heroes' Grave

It was on the Powder's Middle branch,
Nate met his death at the KC Ranch;
No quarter he asked, none would they give,
No show on earth had he to live.
He fought them through long hours of pain;
He fought alone, his comrade slain.
His heart was oak and his nerves were steeled.
God, could this hero's doom be sealed?
In his cabin he lay in slumbers sound;
Outside the demons lurked around.
No warning had he of outside foe,
'Till a bullet laid his comrade low.
His rifle he grasped and fought all day,
For many long hours he'd held them at bay.
When the torch was applied his cheek grew pale,
And he met his death from their leaden hail.
With voices hushed and hearts turned weak,
Oft tears were seen on the browned cheek.
The quiver plays on the lips of pride,
When we think of the death that poor Nate died.
The women with flowers his casket dressed,
And followed in tears to his place of rest.
Then gave him thus as a body of the brave,
Then lowered him down to a hero's grave.

repertory of any of the informants in this oral history project.

One might speculate that the reference to "the indignation meeting at Banner" could mean that a gathering was held at Banner, Wyoming, which is a village situated at the east end of a spur of the Big Horn mountains known as Moncreiffe Ridge, about halfway between Buffalo and Sheridan. Banner is located just inside Sheridan County and perhaps the settlers did not wish to meet within the confines of Johnson County since the invaders, although incarcerated, were still uncomfortably near.³⁸ Perhaps people living in the Banner community were angry enough to have sponsored such a meeting. No such assemblies are specifically mentioned by various writers about the insurrection excepting Helena Huntington Smith, who alludes to indignation meetings in *The War on Powder River*. She mentions such community gatherings as part of her discussion of why the invaders and their hired gunmen were never fully prosecuted:

Wyoming was too exhausted and too sick of the whole business to care. Its sense of outrage over the invasion had spent itself over the past nine months, as one community after another had held meetings and passed resolutions condemning the invaders; it had gradually adjusted itself to the knowledge that they would never pay for their crime.³⁹

Which side "won" the conflict? Most historians agree that neither side conclusively won the war. Likewise, one could say that neither side truly lost. The settlers thwarted the immediate objective of the cattle barons to destroy them and seize their property. The invaders were protected by the United States Army from the wrath of the settlers and from their own alleged violations of the law by the Wyoming state judicial system.

The citizens of Johnson County wrote songs which were intended to stir up public sentiment, to express anger and outrage and to mourn fallen heroes. The settlers had clearly won an emotional victory, for all of the ballads from this conflict commemorate their side. The so-called cattle barons truly believed they were fighting for a just cause. Why have no songs survived, if any were ever written, which present their side of the story? The invaders and their forces were lucky to get out of northeastern Wyoming without being shot or lynched. They plainly had no themes of heroism and sacrifice to celebrate in song.

The Johnson County War ballads are important to local amateur singers and their audiences alike. These songs have a nostalgic, sentimental appeal, for they

are about historical or imaginary events from the singers' own culture, and thus impart a sense of place in one's community. The songs are also an element of some informants' family traditions. They have been handed down as valuable cultural artifacts from one generation to another, perhaps in a slightly altered form, but preserved nonetheless. For instance, Daniel L. Devoe learned "The Invasion Song" from his father who presumably heard it from an uncle who actually participated in the Johnson County War. Now that these songs have been brought to light again, perhaps they, like other relics of the Johnson County War, can be preserved for future generations.

³⁸ Undertaking such a journey to Banner is not an impossibility, even in horse-and-buggy days. Banner is located about eighteen miles from Buffalo, so persons mounted on fresh horses could have ridden the distance in (conservatively) four to six hours, less than a full day's ride. At the height of the hostilities, "a young Methodist preacher named Marvin A. Rader [who] was in sympathy with the people of Johnson County... rode in from Big Horn [a distance of approximately twenty-five miles] to help inspire and organize them to resist attack." Smith, 216. Smith also notes that Rader was one of two ministers who presided at the funeral of Nate Champion and Nick Ray. *Ibid.*, 230. One can ride a horse at a walking gait at about three miles per hour; at a faster gait, such as a lope or canter, a horse and rider can go about five or six miles per hour. Driving a team is somewhat slower, generally about three miles an hour, although buggies can often travel faster than heavier wagons. Thanks to Marie P. Tibbets of Sheridan, Wyoming, who frequently employed such means of travel as a young woman, for information about journeying by horse and buggy. Tibbets, telephone interview by author, 30 May 1995.

³⁹ Smith, 282.

A Sheridan resident, Ariel Downing completed her Ph.D. in musicology at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1997. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Wyoming and a Master of Music from Colorado State University. Downing has played tuba and bass trombone in numerous symphony orchestras, wind bands and jazz ensembles in north-central Colorado. Prior to moving to Colorado, she taught music in grades K-12 in the Arvada-Clearmont and Ten Sleep public school districts. Material for this article was adapted from Downing's doctoral dissertation, "Let 'Er Buck! Music in Cowboy Culture of the Powder River Basin, Wyoming," concerning changing musical styles and traditions found among ranch folk of the middle Powder River Basin. Much of the research consisted of oral histories, many of which were tape-recorded. A number of area musicians, both professional and amateur, were interviewed. Musical preferences, backgrounds and performance venues of these informants were presented, along with discussion of folk and popular songs within their repertoires.

George G. Lobdell, Jr. and the Yale Scientific Expedition of 1871 at Fort Bridger



Division of Cultural Resources

Fort Bridger

By Mary Faith Pankin

On August 22, 1871, the eleven members of the Yale Scientific Expedition, led by Professor Othniel Charles Marsh, arrived at Fort Bridger, Wyoming for a five week stay. Their purpose was to uncover fossils which would answer basic paleontological questions. Their discoveries ultimately would reside in the University's Peabody Museum. For most of the young participants, however, a sense of adventure was an equally motivating factor. George Granville Lobdell, Jr., a recent Yale graduate from Wilmington, Delaware, was one expedition member. He kept a detailed diary of the expedition, two volumes of which are extant.¹ In them he vividly portrayed back-breaking work, colorful characters, brushes with danger, and incidents of uninhibited high jinx, with wonder, astuteness, and wry humor.

George G. Lobdell, Jr. (1850-1942) was the son of George Granville Lobdell (1817-1894), president of the Lobdell Car Wheel Company, and Adeline Wheeler

Lobdell (1817-1909). He attended the T. Clarkson Taylor Academy in Wilmington and Yale Sheffield Scientific School (class of 1871) where he had specialized in chemistry. Accompanying him from Wilmington was his friend and Yale classmate John Franklin Quigley (1848-1897), the son of Eliza Quigley and Philip Quigley (1816-1884), a prominent civil engineer.²

¹ These two volumes covering August 22, 1871 through December 23, 1871, are in the possession of the author, Lobdell's great-granddaughter. For a brief summary of the diary see Mary Faith Pusey [Pankin], "The Yale Scientific Expedition of 1871," *Manuscripts* 28 (Spring 1976): 97-105.

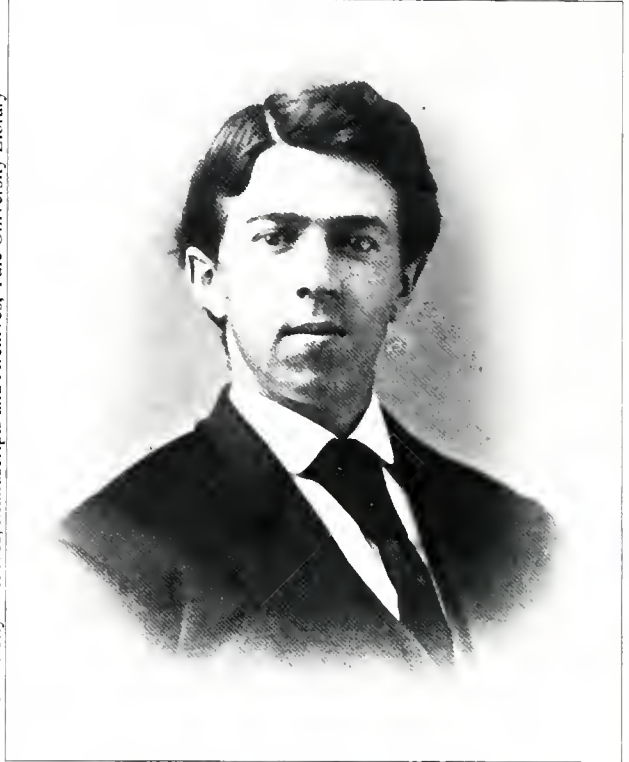
² Jack, as he was called, later joined his father's business, and the Quigleys received the contract for building the Machinery and Agricultural Halls at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. *Biographical Record: Classes from Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-eight to Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-two of the Sheffield Scientific School* (New Haven: Yale University, 1910), 171-173, 181-182.

Both graduates had been reared in the expanding Delaware city, where the population had grown from 8,452 in 1840 to 30,841 in 1870.³ Local men had founded the shipbuilding, railroad car and other industries which added to Wilmington's prosperity. Among the four largest of these firms was the Lobdell Car Wheel Company.⁴ Members of this upper middle business class took part in a wide variety of public spirited activities, contributing to the social, cultural, and material good of the community.⁵

The senior George Lobdell was a member of this middle class elite. He was apprenticed as a youth to his uncle Jonathan Bonney and, after Bonney's death in 1838, a partner with Charles Bush. In 1859 he gained complete control of the company, changed its name to the Lobdell Car Wheel Company in 1871 and served as president until his death. Bonney had patented a railroad car wheel with a rim of chilled iron, and by 1867 the company had become the world's largest producer of railroad car wheels, with an annual gross income of \$585,000.⁶ Lobdell served on many civic boards and in 1869 was elected president of the Masonic Hall Company, whose purpose was to erect a building for the fraternal organization's meetings as well as for musical and theatrical presentations.⁷ Although Mrs. Lobdell gave birth to ten children between 1842 and 1860, only five daughters and two sons, including George Jr., were alive in 1871.

Young Lobdell could scarcely have had a more knowledgeable and respected leader than Yale's Professor Marsh, who since 1866 had served as the first professor of vertebrate paleontology in the United States. Marsh has been called "one of the most colorful and lauded figures of nineteenth century science" and "the greatest proponent of Darwinism in nineteenth century America."⁸ He is credited with assembling the magnificent collection of fossils that form the basis of the Peabody Museum at Yale. Born in 1831, the scientist was fortunate in that his mother, who died when he was three years old, was the sister of the philanthropist George Peabody (1795-1869), who took an interest in his young nephew. From an early age Marsh had pursued a fascination for geology. His uncle paid for his education at Yale, where he received a bachelor's degree in 1860. In 1861-1862 he continued his studies at the recently formed Yale Sheffield Scientific School and later studied paleontology in Germany. In 1866 Marsh persuaded Peabody to contribute money for the construction of the museum of natural history that now bears his name. With his uncle's financial backing he became a non-teaching and

Yale University Archives, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library



George G. Lobdell, Jr., 1871

non-salaried professor of paleontology at the Sheffield Scientific School.⁹

In the summer of 1868 Marsh attended a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago. He took the occasion to ride the length of the Union Pacific Railroad to a point sixty miles beyond Benton, Wyoming. He became convinced

³ Carol E. Hoffeecker, *Wilmington, Delaware: Portrait of an Industrial City, 1830-1910* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1974), 71.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵ For a detailed summary of the range of these efforts and a discussion of the enlightened self interest that led to them, see *Ibid.*, 71-109.

⁶ *Historical Sketch, Lobdell Car Wheel Company* (n.p.: Association of Manufacturers of Chilled Car Wheels, 1936), 1-2; Harold C. Livesay, "The Lobdell Car Wheel Co., 1830-1867," *Business History Review* 42 (Summer 1968): 171-178.

⁷ Toni Young, *The Grand Experience: a Drama in Five Acts Containing a Description of Wilmington's Grand Opera House & Masonic Temple, a Victorian Building in the Second Empire Style and a History of the Many Parts It Has Played in the Delaware Community for More than a Century* (Watkins Glen, N.Y.: American Life Foundation & Study Institute, 1976), 14-18.

⁸ Mark J. McCarren, *The Scientific Contributions of Othniel Charles Marsh: Birds, Bones, and Brontotheres* (New Haven: Yale University, 1993), 1.

⁹ For a complete biography of Marsh, see Charles Schuchert and Clara Mae LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940).

that this region would be a good fossil-hunting ground and he soon planned an expedition to study a large expanse of the West. He conceived of a scheme by which some of his current and former students, who would pay their own way, would accompany him. He would use his influence to get the protection of the U.S. Army through areas considered dangerous. Indian wars delayed his first trip until 1870. In the interim he made news by exposing a hoax in Syracuse, New York, where the so-called "Cardiff Giant," a huge man-sized fossil, was being shown off to the gullible. Marsh revealed that the giant had been carved from gypsum and was not a real fossil. In 1869 George Peabody died, leaving the professor with the financial resources to lead expeditions from 1870 through 1873.¹⁰

Marsh was of medium height, with blue eyes and a reddish beard. Although generally kindly and cheerful, even jovial in the company of men, his single-minded pursuit of his scientific goals could make him seem forbidding at times. Colleagues noticed that he was reticent to share his innermost thoughts and seemed to avoid true intimacy. One biographer wrote that he did not tolerate opposition to his purposes and that "he resented any encroachment upon the particular fields of research in which he was engaged."¹¹

Before the 1870s discoveries of dinosaur remains were rare. With Marsh's finds and those of his competitors, an exciting scientific era began. The first

expedition of June-December 1870 consisted of Marsh and twelve Yale men. The group worked in Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming (including Fort Bridger), Utah, and western Kansas.¹² Among their finds were the remains of several species of horses and bones of the great sea serpents (mosasaurs). In Kansas they found the bones of what proved to be the first North American pterodactyl, or flying reptile.¹³

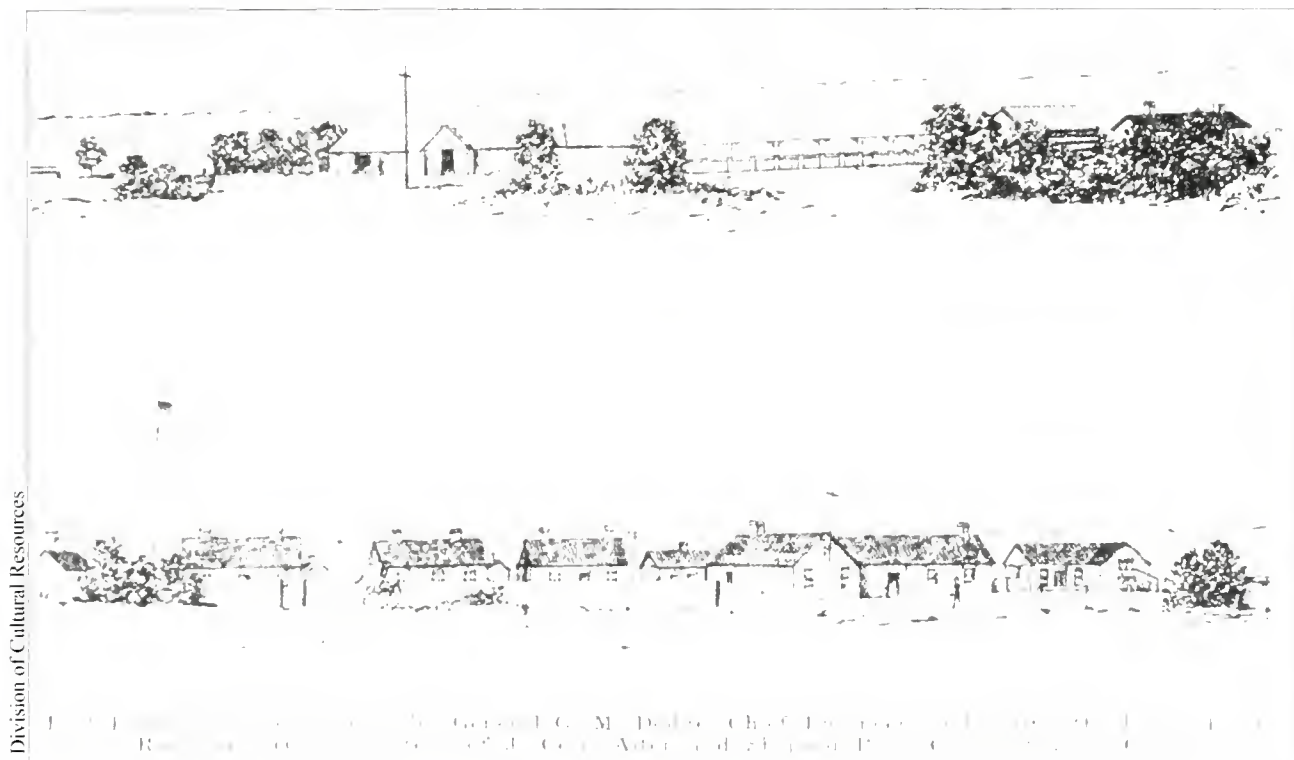
For these young participants, just as with the 1871 group, the excitement resulted as much from the rough living and danger of the West as from the intellectual challenge. They survived a prairie fire. The presence of hostile Indians required a military escort. The famed

¹⁰ Bernard Jaffe, *Men of Science in America: the Story of American Science Told Through the Lives and Achievements of Twenty Outstanding Men from Earliest Colonial Times to the Present Day*. Rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), 279-306. For other concise biographical summaries of Marsh see Charles E. Beecher, "Othniel Charles Marsh," *American Journal of Science*, 4th ser., vol. 7 (June, 1899): 403-428; and Charles Schuchert, "Biographical Memoir of Othniel Charles Marsh, 1831-1899," *Biographical Memoirs of National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 20 (1939): 1-78.

¹¹ Beecher, "Othniel Charles Marsh," 406.

¹² *Ibid.*, 409-410.

¹³ Richard Swann Lull, "The Yale Collection of Fossil Horses," no. 1 of "Collections of Yale University," *Supplement to Yale Alumni Weekly* (May 2, 1913): 3; and McCarren, *The Scientific Contributions of Othniel Charles Marsh*, 13.



Fort Bridger in 1867, sketch by General G. M. Dodge, Chief Engineer in building the Union Pacific Railroad.



Harry D. Ziegler, 1871

scout Buffalo Bill accompanied them for a day and exchanged manly jokes.¹⁴

During the winter of 1870-1871 Marsh's research convinced him that his Kansas discovery was indeed a pterodactyl. This fact made him all the more anxious to return to the Fort Wallace, Kansas, area as well as other previous hunting grounds. On the second expedition, besides Lobdell and Quigley, were eight other men, all Yale graduates:

John Jay Dubois (1846-1898), Yale 1867, Columbia LL.B. 1869, later a New York lawyer.

Oscar Harger (1843-1887), Yale 1868, later Marsh's assistant for seventeen years.

George Macculloch Keasbey (1850-1924), Yale 1871, later a Newark, N.J., lawyer, who served in 1873 on the U.S. government survey of the One Hundredth Meridian.

Alfred Bishop Mason (1851-1933), Yale 1871, later an editorial writer and lawyer in Chicago. He became an executive for several railroads. He wrote a series of boys' books as well as works on law and constitutional history, including *A Primer of Political Economy*.

Frederick Mead (1848-1918), Yale 1871, later a New York tea merchant.

Joseph French Page (1848-1928), Yale 1871, later a Philadelphia wool merchant and real estate executive.

Theodore Gordon Peck (1848-1934), Yale 1871, later a brick manufacturer in West Haverstraw, N.Y.

Harry Degen Ziegler (1850-1909), Yale 1871, later a distilling company director. Ziegler married Lobdell's sister Florence Delano Lobdell in 1876 and the two lived in Philadelphia.¹⁵

The first volume of Lobdell's diary, unfortunately, is missing, but other sources reveal that the group arrived in Fort Wallace and rode out on July 2 with an army escort. The Kansas weather alternated between torrid days and torrential rainy nights. In spite of the weather, exhausting work, unreliable riding mounts, and poor sanitation, their youthful stamina and occasional alcoholic indulgence kept their morale high.¹⁶ Returning to the spot where he had made the previous find, Marsh joyfully uncovered more pterodactyl bones, lending exactness to his calculation of the large size of the creature. Spending about a month in this locality, the crew found other pterodactyls, which Marsh concluded were toothless and had wing spans of twenty to twenty-five feet. The group then went to Denver, Colorado, for several days of rest to escape the heat and rain. They went to Fort Bridger by way of Cheyenne, arriving on August 22, when Lobdell's account starts.¹⁷

Fort Bridger is located in the southwest corner of Wyoming, in Uinta County, which had been organized in 1869. Founded in 1843 as an Oregon Trail supply stop by the trapper and scout James Bridger (1804-1881) and his partner Louis Vasquez, it became known as a mail, express, and telegraph station. It had been occupied by Mormon colonists from Utah in the 1850s and burned in the so-called Mormon War of 1857. In 1858 it was rebuilt as a United States military post and was used in this way until 1890. When the army

¹⁴ Charles Betts, "The Yale College Expedition of 1870," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 43 (June-Nov. 1871): 663-671. Buffalo Bill, or William F. Cody (1846-1917) became Marsh's lifelong friend, visiting him in New Haven on several occasions. Schuchert and LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 103.

¹⁵ Schuchert and LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 120-121.

¹⁶ Letter of Alfred Bishop Mason, to "Tom," [probably Thomas Thacher (1850-1919), a Yale classmate], Aug. 3, 1871, Othniel Charles Marsh Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, Microfilm reel 11.

¹⁷ Schuchert and LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 121-124. Marsh made public reports on some of his findings. For example, see his report of a skeleton of a small *Hadrosaurus* in *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, 3rd series, vol. 3, no. 13-18 (Jan.-June 1872): 301.

withdrew troops in 1861 because of Civil War demands, a volunteer company of about sixty guards protected the fort until the December 1862 deployment of Company I, Third California Infantry Volunteers. During 1868-1869 the construction crew of the Union Pacific Railroad required a military escort from the fort. Currently Fort Bridger is a Wyoming state historic site.¹⁸

The high desert plains which surround the valley on three sides can appear barren and uninviting. Summers are short, with sometimes violent thunderstorms. Winter arrives early, with snow falling as early as October.¹⁹ The harsh climate resulted in health problems such as frostbite and the rapid spread of disease caused by overly snug and poorly ventilated barracks.²⁰ The 1870 party had visited the fort and its environs during the previous summer for several weeks. During this time they had braved an elk stampede, a peaceful encounter with Ute Indians, and a standoff with grain thieves.²¹

By 1871, however, the army reservation had decreased in size because of its waning military importance. In March a War Department order had reduced the fort's area to about four square miles, turning over about 196 square miles to the Department of the Interior.²² Fort Bridger was increasingly a stop for scientific expeditions. In addition to the Yale party, a government geological survey of the Uinta Mountains, led by Ferdinand V. Hayden (1829-1887), visited the fort in September 1870. The Army Corps of Engineers headquartered there while making a scientific reconnaissance of Wyoming in June 1871.²³

The fort's commanding officer was Major Robert Smith La Motte (1825-1888) of the 13th U.S. Infantry. La Motte, who served in that capacity April 25, 1870-September 1, 1872, was an affectionate family man and faithful correspondent, who wrote to his mother almost every week for many years.²⁴ In the letters he only briefly mentioned Marsh's expeditions, but he did name the two Wilmingtonians and commented that Marsh thought highly of them.²⁵

The party camped in tents near the shore of Black's Fork, a branch of which flowed through the parade ground. They enjoyed the valley's views of the snow-capped Uinta Mountains and soon spent their spare time fishing and hunting the abundant game, in profligate numbers by modern standards. Since Marsh and Ziegler had visited there the previous year, they received invitations right away and were able to introduce the other young men into the social life of the fort, such as it was. This centered around the family of its leading citizen William A. Carter (1818-1881), a native of Virginia. From 1857 until his death this shrewd

entrepreneur initiated many pursuits and made himself quite wealthy. He ran the trading post, was a judge and post office agent, and had lumber, oil, and mining interests.²⁶ While military commanders came and went, Carter and his family were a constant presence at the fort. The Judge had a reputation as an ethical businessman and fair and responsible judge. The first entries in the second volume of Lobdell's diary describe his arrival and settling in.

Tuesday August 22—

We reached Bridger this P.M. about 1:15—Found Maj. Lamott [sic] in command. He recognized our names when we were introduced. They had no place to put us, so put us in camp, just outside of the quarters the first thing. We have but 3 tents. Prof., Harger & Mead in one, Zieg, Peck, Page & Mason in another, and DuBois in with us. Judge Carter did not show himself. Last year the party were entertained by him, but I guess he got enough of them and doesn't want any more. Went without dinner, except a hunch of some crackers & cheese which Dr. Carter the judge's business manager, kindly gave us, but had a pretty good supper, cooked by one of the soldiers, detailed for that purpose—The Prof was away all day.²⁷ He & Zieg had plenty of offers to dine out but the latter did not

¹⁸ For an extensive history of the fort see Fred R. Gowans and Eugene E. Campbell, *Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975). For a more compact history, see Robert S. Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, ed. William Barton, Phil Roberts, et al. (Casper: Historical Landmark Commission of Wyoming, 1931; Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department, 1981).

¹⁹ Kathaleen Kennington Hamblin, *Bridger Valley: a Guide to the Past* (Mountain View, Wyoming: [The Author], 1993), 1.

²⁰ Jerome Thomases, "Fort Bridger: a Western Community," *Military Affairs* 5 (Autumn 1941):182.

²¹ Betts, "The Yale College Expedition of 1870," 669-671.

²² Gowans and Campbell, *Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness*, 126.

²³ Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 49-52.

²⁴ La Motte's weekly letters to his mother during his stay at Fort Bridger are in: La Motte Family Papers (BANC MSS C-B 450), Box 2, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

²⁵ La Motte Family Papers, La Motte to "Mother," Sept. 3, 1871.

²⁶ Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 61-71. For an examination of Carter's many enterprises, see W.N. Davis, Jr., "The Sutler at Fort Bridger," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 2 (Jan. 1971): 37-54.

²⁷ This was probably James Van Allen Carter, unrelated to the judge, who came to Fort Bridger in 1866, worked as a bookkeeper for Judge Carter, and married his daughter Anna Carter. Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 70. In his more active years Judge Carter employed as many as 100 people. Davis, "The Sutler at Fort Bridger," 50.

accept....Fort Bridger is very pleasantly situated, in a beautiful little valley. Black Fork runs right through the grounds. Smith's Fork and other streams are not far off. We are camped on Black's Fork about 15 minutes walk from the shore. Except the valleys of the streams the country around is nothing but sage deserts. [Thirty] 30 miles south are the Uintah Mountains, some of them 13,000 feet high, and from here we can see the snow capped peaks in certain lights. They say sage hen and trout abound, but not quite so near the fort as we are situated.²⁸

Wednesday, August 23—

One thing is certain, they have cool nights in this locality, although the middle of the day may be quite warm. This morning early, Page, Mase, Keasbey and I started up the valley after sage hens. Walked about 3 miles without seeing one, and then came back. Mead & Peck started off after breakfast for trout, and brought back quite a mess between them. We cooked them for supper, & I tell you they were good. The Prof. ... went off for a day's sport with rods and guns. The Prof. came back about 7:30 with about 40 trout, some of them very fine indeed, and 5 sage hens. They went about 6 miles up stream.

Later that day Lobdell had his first encounter with a Ute Indian. In the early 19th century, the Utes numbered 4,500. The confederacy of seven autonomous bands occupied western Colorado and eastern Utah. In 1868 the United States government persuaded them to move west of the Continental Divide in Colorado. With the discovery of gold in the San Juan Mountains, the Utes ceded their western Colorado lands to the government by treaty in 1873. Utes often dressed in buckskins and adorned themselves with face painting, tattooing and ear ornaments.²⁹ Although they took part in some small disturbances in the 1850s, by this time they were considered a minor nuisance for their petty thievery.³⁰

Wrote a long letter to Will today in answer to the one I received from him yesterday.³¹ Was interrupted while writing it by the advent of one of the aboriginals. He was all rigged out in full dress, had his face all painted up, beads around his wrists, earrings in his ears, quills all over his breast, etc. He was a Ute, and could speak a few English words. His first salutation was "How" then "bread, bread". Zieg brought him a lot of biscuits. Then "meat, meat." Zieg got him all the meat he could find. He got a hold of my gun—"heap big gun?" he asked. We told him yes. ... He had 3 ponies

and a mule with him, and another Indian. His name was Big Bullet. He had come from the Sweetwater, 125 miles off in "3 sleeps" (three days). "One sleep then away—Uintahs," he remarked, meaning, in one day he was going to start for the Uintahs. "Ponies heap tired" and must rest. He was about 5 ft 6 in height, very powerfully built, and very ugly. Had his bow and arrows along in a skin quiver. Had a very fancy knife sheath. He had his knife in it, yet he was all the time asking for "knife, knife." Kept casting his eyes around the tents. I suppose for something to steal as they steal every thing they can lay their hands on. Zieg says he traveled with them last year for two days. Staid in camp all day, except a few minutes in the evening when

²⁸ Sage hens are the females of a kind of native grouse, so called because they feed on the buds of sagebrush. An unnamed army officer quoted by Ellison, wrote that in the Fort Bridger area, turkey-sized sage hens were extremely numerous. Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 37.

²⁹ Barbara A. Leitch, *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Tribes of North America* (Algonac, Michigan: Reference Publications, 1979), 493-494.

³⁰ Thomases, "Fort Bridger: a Western Community," 183.

³¹ Lobdell's older brother William Wheeler Lobdell (1844-1914) had been serving as secretary of the Lobdell Car Wheel Company since 1867.



Judge William A. Carter

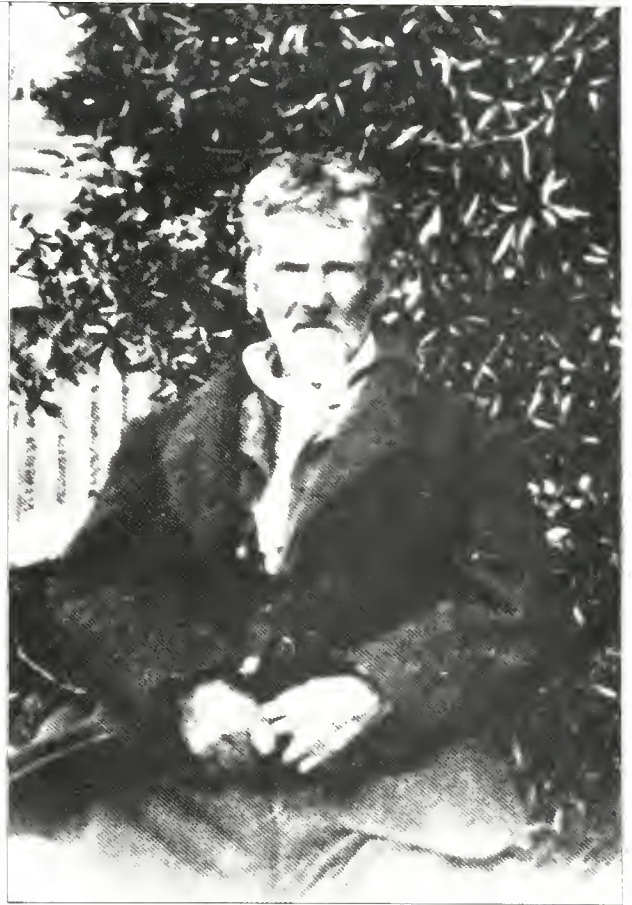
Keasbey & I went in to mail our letters. Jack & Zieg went in to play whist with Capt. Whittlesey & some other officer.

Thursday August 24—

Took a walk into the store after breakfast this morning. Ordered a pair of moccasins for myself, and one for Carrie.³² Got weighed, weight 132—gained two pounds since getting to Denver. Was introduced to Col. Whittlesey. He was a Yale '53 man. Looks like a regular "topper"; his cheeks are as red as fire—he is a comical dick, but drinks gobs of whiskey I know.³³ He invited us to come see him, and Keasbey went. I ought to have gone but didn't.

The group soon visited another well known character, John Robertson, nicknamed "Uncle Jack Robinson" (1806-1884), who lived near the fort. He had been on the frontier for many years, had married two Shoshone Indian wives-- Marook and Toggy-- and cared for many unrelated Indian children. A visiting army officer in 1866 described him as a hard-drinking, generous, cheerful, and entertaining natural gentleman who had earned and lost a large amount of money trapping and trading. The famous English traveler Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) met him in 1860 and reported that the old man had an investment of \$75,000 in St. Louis but preferred to live on the frontier.³⁴ He is buried in the Fort Bridger Cemetery, as are Judge Carter and Mrs. Carter.

First though, I took a ride out to "Uncle Jack's" with Mead, Page, Keasbey & Jack. Zieg and Mason started with us but as we had a wagon without springs and the road was very rough, they soon gave it up, got out, and walked home. Uncle Jack Robinson is an old settler who has been here 40 years. His ranche [sic] is about 5 miles from the post on a branch of Smith's Fork. We rode out for the purpose of buying ponies, as he generally has a good stock on hand, but he had but two to sell and Mead bought one. No one would take the other. Uncle Jack has quite a ranche [sic] for the locality, four separate log huts. His ranche [sic] is the great headquarters for Indians. He has one or two beside an old hag, about 100-130 ears old, and when we were there, he had a "buck" as they call them—viz., an Indian—either Ute or Shoshone—who helped him with his stock. This fellow had a buffalo robe wrapped around him, although he was apparently dressed as we in other respects. The way he could ride



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John "Jack" Robertson

was a caution. Uncle Jack was once quite rich, 200 or 300 thousand, they say, but he has lost some of it. We got back to camp about 5 o'clock, had a jolly good dinner, after which we loafed around, built a fire in the evening and sat around it. Prof. & Maj. La Motte went hunting and returned late in the evening, with 14 sage hens and three rabbits.

³² Lobdell's sister Carolyn Wheeler Lobdell (1851-1913).

³³ Charles Henry Whittlesey (1832-1871) of New Haven, Connecticut, graduated from Yale in 1853 and had been an army captain since 1866. Lobdell's assessment of his drinking habits may or may not have been correct. In any case, the officer died soon after the party left, on October 18 of gastroenteritis, according to La Motte, who also wrote that he had attacks of violent neuralgia in the head sufficient to affect his mind. See *Records of the United States Army Commands: Fort Bridger* (Washington, 1949; reproduced for the University of Wyoming), reel 2, Letters sent, 1871- Oct. 18; Oct. 25. The cause of his death was more likely to have been typhoid fever, as reported in *Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College* 2nd printed series, no. 2 (July 10, 1872): 62.

³⁴ Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 39-40; Hamblin, *Bridger Valley*, 281-283; and Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, ed. with an introduction and notes by Fawn M. Brodie (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 196.

Lobdell and others bought mounts for the expedition and were guests of Judge Carter's family. Carter, in addition to being a devoted husband, was a well-educated man who provided a schoolhouse and teachers for his children so they would be able to attend college. He was said to have the largest library in the territory and was renowned for his hospitality. He owned a Steinway piano, which was used for dances and other musical entertainments.³⁵

Friday August 25—

We were all, nearby, busily engaged today in buying ponies for the trip—Orders from Prof are that we pull out tomorrow noon. After much running around, I finally bought a pony from Mr. Day, the clerk in Judge Carter's store, for \$65, and he promised to take him back for \$40 at least. Jack got a horse from Sergeant Elsley for \$80, and sells it back for \$60. He had saddle, etc. thrown in also. Zieg and Harger have mules. The rest of the fellows got ponies one way or the other, except Peck, who was unable to get a pony so had to hire a mule. We have only 14 mules in the outfit and 12 of those are wagon mules.... In the evening "snobbed up" and called on Maj. Lammott [sic] & wife with Jack & Zieg, and also on Judge Carter & family. The pretty Miss Carter, that Zieg talked so much about last year did not make her appearance, but beside the other daughters there was present Miss Atwood the post governess.³⁶ While we were there Lieut. Wood, Adj [utant] of the post came in.³⁷ Methinks he's rather soft on the governess as he takes her riding very often, and sort of hangs around her. Mead was there when we called, and before we left the Prof. made his appearance, he having left there to go call on Maj. Lammott [sic], when he arrived just as we left—

The next day the group left for their camp with a military guard of ten men drawn from the fort's two remaining companies. A Congressionally ordered pay cut had led to poor morale and many desertions in the previous two months.³⁸ Along with a spate of desertions came the problem of frequent drunkenness among enlisted men and even officers. Prior to their departure, some of the party accepted Whittlesley's invitation to a whiskey-laden lunch, a circumstance which may have confirmed Lobdell's suspicions about the officer's excessive drinking. The source of the alcohol was Judge Carter's store, which sold glasses of whiskey to enlisted men and larger quantities to officers and civilians. The judge customarily took care that his product met higher

than average purity and taste levels as compared with the usual low standards of the day.³⁹ The sober Lobdell seemed tolerantly amused by the resulting antics of his friend Jack Quigley.

Saturday August 26—

Went in to the post this morning to get my pony shod. Found that his back had been bitten by a mule or something and thus opened an old sore. Mr. Day did not want me to take him and gave back the \$65. I finally succeeded in renting a mare from Chris, the wheelwright for \$25.00 and after getting her shod went out to camp. The wagons came out and we loaded them up. Then had a visit from Col. Whittlesey and Capt. Clift, and as we were waiting for the soldiers, the former invited us in to his quarters, "No. 2, Fifth Avenue" as he facetiously termed it, where he generously treated us to a lunch consisting of cold ham & tongue with crackers and plenty of whiskey.⁴⁰ A bottle of the latter had been opened at camp, and in consequence of the numerous inhibitions, Mead was anything but sober. While at the Col.'s, Mead was pretty loud mouthed, and none, except myself were exactly right, although Zieg, Jack & Keasbey were by no means tight. As soon as we left the Col.'s, we saddled up and started off. Went out to camp & found the wagon gone. Jack & Zieg were on ahead. Keasbey & I started after them and caught up to the train just before getting to Uncle Jack's. Found Zieg and Jack at the latter place- and Smith our guide. He told us the camp was to be about 2 1/2 miles down Smith's Fork, so we pushed on. Jack, because of frequent deep potations at the store and from his flask after leaving the Post, was quite tight. In fact, he could hardly keep [on] the saddle. He wanted to race with everyone who came along, and beat

³⁵ Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 61-70; Gowans and Campbell, *Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness*, 150.

³⁶ Judge Carter reared four daughters and two sons at Fort Bridger. The "pretty daughter" could have been the eldest girl Mary Ada. Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 70.

³⁷ A 2nd Lieutenant W.W. Wood was listed as an officer available for court martial duty in a letter sent from the fort to the Judge Advocate, Department of the Platte, Omaha, on August 27, 1871. *Records of the United States Army Commands: Fort Bridger*, reel 2.

³⁸ Url Lanham, *The Bone Hunters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 109. The March pay cut resulted in twelve desertions, although three returned because of the cold. Thomases, "Fort Bridger: a Western Community," 185.

³⁹ Davis, "The Sutler at Fort Bridger," 41.

⁴⁰ Captain E.W. Clift served as the fort's commanding officer, Sept. 1-Oct. 4, 1872. Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 75.

everybody he raced with. [Three] or 4 times he rolled over to one side, and first caught himself on the neck of his horse. Once he hit his head against his horse's neck and gave himself a black eye. Mase came up presently—after leaving Uncle Jack's. He too was so-so. Wanted to bet he could ride standing up in his saddle. We pitched camp about 5 o'clock, and Slaughter, whom Maj. Lammott [sic] made go with us cooked us a bully supper. The Prof. and Mead did not get in till about 6, and DuBois, the rearguard, as Ed Lane dubbed him, came straying in still later. We had no drinking water, except for a well which Smith had dug, but that was very good, although not clear by any means.

Over the next few weeks the group worked over several areas in the region, meeting with some success. They found some teeth, lizard and jawbone fossils, which, unfortunately, Lobdell does not describe in enough detail to identify them as any that Marsh reported to scientific journals. A member of the party, writing in the *New-York Times*, claimed that the month's rewards were the result of painstaking work: "... we unearthed large quantities of bones of animals resembling the turtle, lizard, serpent, crocodile,

rhinoceros, tapir and elephant, and...fossils of all dimensions, down to a tiny tooth scarcely larger than the head of a pin....we have literally crawled over the country on our hands and knees."⁴¹

Sunday, August 27—

After breakfast the Prof. took us out with him to show us the lay of the land, and our working ground. We struck southeast from camp, to Grizzly Buttes, then continued on till we struck its lodge pole trail, i.e., a trail made by Indians with their ponies, leaving lodge poles tied on the side of them.⁴² This trail follows up some very steep buttes, so steep we had to get off and lead them up. We followed the lodge poles till we struck a wood trail leading to the Henry's Fork road, which we followed down till we struck the latter, then came home by it....

⁴¹ "The Yale Party," *New-York Times*, Oct. 17, 1871.

⁴² Grizzly Buttes was the name given to some fossil bearing badland buttes running from northeast to southwest about five miles east of the current town of Lyman. The picturesque name comes from Jack Robertson's story that he had once found a petrified grizzly bear there. Hamblin, *Bridger Valley*, 505.



O. C. Marsh, 1877.
Manuscripts and Archives,
Yale University Library

The group generally stayed in good spirits, and got along well, playing whist in the evenings. For Lobdell, the arrival of letters was a very welcome event. From time to time, he expresses a slight disapproval of DuBois's apparent laggardliness, in spite of the fact the young man had been energetic enough to earn a law degree from Columbia University and was later a successful New York attorney.

Wednesday August 30—

Finished up the region. We started Monday, today, without getting much. We are having first-rate times on this trip. The weather has been cool and pleasant, moonlight nights, and cool mornings till the sun rises, then it gets warm, but the air is so bracing one does not get tired as we did in Kansas. Evenings we usually spend in Zieg's tent, listening to the conversation, drinking & playing cards. Zieg & Mase have one side of the tent, Rick & Page the other. Zieg & Mase call their side the garden of Eden, the other, the "bear garden," because as they say all the time they growl at each other....

Friday Sept. 1--

Started out for the same general locality as yesterday, but worked to the east or left hand instead of the right. Had very poor luck and returned early, getting into camp by 4 o'clock. Mason's pony broke loose last night, and Zieg occupied the most of the morning hunting her up. Finally found her in one of McDonald's herds. McDonald has a ranch about 2 miles from camp and the pony formerly ran with his herd.

Saturday Sept. 2--

Took a different region today. North of the Henry's Fork road--DuBois started about his usual distance in the rear and did not join us all day. We had very poor luck for this round but Jack & I got two good lizards. Returned about 5 o'clock. One of the teamsters went in to the post and when he returns will bring the mail with him....

Tuesday Sept. 5--

Went with Peck today, as he had a region very rich in good fossils--we had very good luck. I got a lizard & some other things. Jack found several nice jaws. Keasbey had poor luck. Zieg & DuBois went to the

post today, Zieg after the wagons, etc., for they move camp tomorrow--& DuBois to get his saddle fixed, as it hurts his "beloved Kate." He makes more fuss than a little over his pony which by the way is the best in the outfit. Zieg stayed in all night but DuBois came out and brought the mail. Nothing for me, which is very strange. Played whist again tonight with Mase & Page. Mead & I beat them 3 out of 5, they winning 2 games.

Wednesday Sept. 6--

Moved camp today about 5 miles, over on Sage Creek, near where we bathed Sunday last. Jack went with the wagons. DuBois was the first to start off--a remarkable incident which can be accounted for only by the fact that he merely concerned himself making ready his personal effects etc. Keasbey & I went back on the old trail, stopped before we got to the hunting place of yesterday, and after looking around a while and not finding anything pushed on beyond. Struck Dube at the lunching place--and as it was late when we started, stopped for lunch after which we went farther on. Had pretty good luck. Found a lizard and 2 or 3 little jaws, one of which the Prof. had never seen before. Keasbey & I were the last in camp, we were so far away. It took us 1 1/2 hours to get in. Built a camp fire at night, and all sat around it.

Thursday Sept. 7--

Took my party this morning to a canyon above the lodge pole trail to a spot where we went the Sunday Prof. took us around. We did not find anything of any consequence, although there were some good looking buttes there. The region had been worked over pretty thoroughly last summer. We could see lots of old foot marks, and plenty of buttes, but nothing else. A rain storm came up about noon, and DuBois went home. He started just in time to get home by the time the storm was over, and hence got nice & wet. I got into a little cave and kept comparatively dry. Jack & Keasbey got under some cedars. They went home shortly after lunch, but I hunted around until 3 o'clock. Got in about 4, found Zieg & his party in, they had found nothing but got nicely wet....

Friday Sept. 8--

The Prof. thought at first that he would take us with him, but changed his mind before we got started and told us to take the canyon beyond him. He went with us

to start us and teach us how to hunt for little things, after which he left us to ourselves. DuBois, for a great wonder started with us this morning. We had first rate luck, I especially. Jack & Keasbey went to Uncle Jack's [Robertson's] after lunch, to see about a pair of moccasins for the former, and when they returned, Jack went on

Saturday Sept. 9--

....Jack & I started back for the butte where I left off yesterday, leaving Dube & Keasbey, who were behind as usual, to follow but the Prof. sent Keasbey off with Zieg. Jack & I had first rate luck. I worked on the same butte all day, and got about a dozen different things from it, besides what I got yesterday. Jack also got some things from the same butte. We each of us got a new carnivore and Jack a new mammal also. A rain storm came up about 2 o'clock, and thinking it would be a rainy day, we put for camp, which we reached without getting very wet. Found Zieg & Keasbey in and the others straggled in afterwards. Mason went to the post to order a buckskin suit. He returned after supper with the mail--none for me--I'll teach them a lesson at home when I write again....

The rainy autumn weather was beginning to carry a chill, occasional frost appeared, and the snow-capped Uinta Mountains presented the observers with a beautiful view. Professor Marsh was an accomplished fisherman, and freshly-caught fish continued to be a staple in their diet.

Monday Sept. 11--

Found it very rainy this morning and no prospect of clearing off at first. Finally the clouds broke, and we concluded to move camp down to Henry's Fork, 15 miles S.E. from Sage Creek camp. The road was quite muddy when we started, about 11 o'clock, but it soon dried off. Prof. & a party of us started on ahead, and then about 5 miles from Henry's Fork, stopped to hunt fossils. The wagon road runs along Sage Creek for about 7 or 8 miles then crosses it and strikes over to Henry's Fork, through buttes and washouts. At one place it ascends a very steep hill, up the divide, just before reaching the Fork. Here they have had to double up in order to get the wagons up the hill. We found quite a number of fossils, although we did not look very long, or very thoroughly. Peck found a very good thing. It was more or less showery during the day. We started for camp about 4 o'clock--going around by the

road. After passing over the divide, the Uintahs burst upon our view, and I think their snow capped peaks glistening in the sunlight afforded one of the most magnificent spectacles I have ever witnessed. Reached camp in about an hour. Found it very pleasantly located. The creek runs right back of the tents--about 20 yds.--is about the size of Blacks Fork & [is] full of trout. The Prof. of course was not satisfied with the position of his tent, which was next to ours, Zieg's being on the other side of us. Mead & DuBois have a tent set out and they were next to Prof. but the latter had his moved beyond all the others. Tonight we had another rain, the most violent we have yet had. It even wet through the tent. After it cleared off--cold.

Tuesday Sept. 12--

When I awoke early this morning before sunrise--found the ground all covered with frost, and my buffalo robe wet with dew. It was very cold. The water in nearly all the buckets was frozen. The rain storm here had been a snow storm in the mountains and the peaks were covered with snow far lower than the usual limit. They presented a most magnificent spectacle from camp--for the atmosphere was as clear as could be, and the sunlight on the snow made a splendid picture. Our party (Jack, Keas, & I)--with Dube for rear guard, started for a region just beyond where we were yesterday, farthest away from camp as usual....We got in rather late for supper, as Jack & Keasbey were loaded & had to walk their ponies. This morning before breakfast Prof. went fishing and returned before we could get away with 28 or 30 trout. Henry's Fork abounds in trout, and we are sure to live well while here for the Prof. is an excellent fisherman....

Professor Marsh allowed his team members two days off for hunting and fishing expeditions. Lobdell, Keasbey, and Quigley planned their trip for the weekend, while others went earlier in the week. Lobdell was somewhat mollified about his lack of letters when he learned from his sister Carrie that the family had been traveling for two weeks. In the same mail came a newspaper containing the results of the Wilmington city council election. The *Wilmington Daily Commercial* reported a Republican sweep, with a majority of three on the council.⁴³ Jack Quigley's father was one of the successful candidates.

⁴³ *Wilmington Daily Commercial*, Sept. 6, 1871.

Thursday Sept. 14—

Returned to same region. Jack got sick & came home--had a headache he said--about as much "letter ache" I guess. Keasbey & I did not get very much but did not return empty-handed--got home a little after 4, found a letter from Carrie for me and a paper from Bob, I presume --containing an account of the election at home. The city went Republican by a large majority (850 or so). Election was for councilmen & pres. of council. Jack's father is elected to council from the 6th ward. Carrie's letter partly excused the lack of letters previously. The folks have all been away from home for the past two weeks, and hence I have received no letters....Zieg, Mase & Page started off for their trip to the mountains today, taking with them 2 days rations. Mead, Peck & party did not return tonight, although their time was up.

After narrowly avoiding injury in a riding mishap and encouraged by another party's siting of deer, elk, and other game, Lobdell set out with three friends on a hunt, carrying food, blankets, and ammunition. They had initial difficulty finding their way but pressed on. Although they saw a tantalizing number of deer and antelope as well as the usual sage hens and rabbits, they did not land any game. For Lobdell, however, the beauty of the mountains and the valley made up for the cold weather and lack of tangible rewards from the hunt.

Friday Sept. 15--

Went back to the old place, but returned early to get ready for our trip tomorrow. Keasbey & I went out after sage hen. Keasbey shot a couple but I could not hit them, although I had plenty of good shots. I had quite a narrow escape from [an] accident today. When we were out shooting Polly (my pony) fell down, and rolled me off with the exception of my left foot, which caught in the stirrup. The pony getting up became frightened at my position and commenced to run, dragging me quite a distance through sage brush, but I managed to get my foot out before any damage was done. We got everything ready tonight for the trip, so as to get an early start, and not get off about 10, as the other fellows did. Smith & his party returned tonight bringing a deer with them, which Smith had shot. None of the others killed any. Mead wounded a fawn but it got away from him. Peck saw a California lion & shot at it but did not hit it. They are animals somewhat like panthers, and are very cowardly. Will not fight if they can run. Smith saw a herd of elk, but did not get a shot

at any. He told Jack where to go tomorrow to find lots of deer. Jack mapped out the country for us, but I did not pay much attention to it, so we rely on Jack for guide....

Saturday Sept. 16--

Got off this morning directly after breakfast. We got up before breakfast and got everything ready, even to saddling our ponies. We took with us 45 biscuits, 2 boxes of sardines, the two sage hens we got last night-- & coffee, sugar, salt & pepper. Keasbey & I took our robes & overcoats, Jack took besides his blue blankets and rubber blankets. We all had our carbines & about 20 rounds of ammunition. We struck up first for the hay stack about a mile above camp, on the opposite side of the fork--there across for the nearest mountain expecting to strike Henry's Fork before we reached it....Not finding the fork--or any indication of it--before reaching the mountains we pulled off to the right, and traveled over divide after divide--finally struck some stream which at first we thought sure was the fork, but it turned out to be a small stream. We crossed this with some difficulty, on account of the thick undergrowth, and finally reached a nice cotton wood grove. There we stopped for lunch. While eating which we saw a very large herd of antelope, 25 or 30 at least. They were too far off to shoot however. We saw lots of sage hens & jack rabbits on the way over. Keasbey & Jack tried their rifles on sage hen and I shot once at a jack rabbit. None of the shots hit--however. After lunch we pushed on over--divide after divide--and finally reached the banks of the fork. The view was magnificent. We were high above the bed of the stream and could only just hear the gurgling of the water. We could not see the water for the thick growth of trees, but could trace it along by its undergrowth and shrubbery, some distance downstream as well as a short ways up, to a point where it wound around the mountain. After gazing upon the scene for some minutes we descended the hill, and pursued our way up hill--at first over an entirely new road but after while we found a trail and this we followed as far as we could. The fallen trees and thick underbrush finally stopped our course on the right bank, there we turned back, crossed the stream and tried it on the left bank, but we could not get any farther than before. We spent the afternoon until 6 o'clock careening around, & looking for the camp of the other party, but not finding it--finally gave up the hunt and pitched camp, on a nice grassy slope--just at the edge of a grove, and on the east side of a hill. Keasbey went

fishing while Jack & I got some firewood, made a fire, and started the coffee to boiling. When Keasbey returned (without anything) we had supper. He found the fawn that Mead shot, and lots of foot prints showing that we were not far from the old camp. We sat around the fire and talked until about 9 o'clock, then we wrapped ourselves in our robes and went to sleep. Saw two deer while we were riding along the stream, but could not get a shot at them.

Sunday Sept. 17--

We got up before sunrise this morning and started for a deer hunt--before breakfast. Jack stopped at a place near camp, where there were plenty of tracks and Keasbey & I beat around through the woods, stopping after a while at another spot, showing fresh tracks, but none of us saw any game. We saw plenty of tracks, elk as well as deer, but no animals, except jack rabbits. About 9 o'clock we went back to camp, got breakfast and then started for the mountains. We made a bee line nearly for the butte to the right of the big opening opposite camp, reached it about noon, and leaving our horses at the bottom, climbed to the top. The view from there was perfectly grand. Although the atmosphere was rather hazy & cloudy we could see the mountains opposite quite plainly, and while we were ascending we were visited by a snow storm. Where we were only a few flakes fell but in the mountains proper it snowed for some time, and the amount on the summit of the peaks, was perceptibly increased. The gorge at the foot of the range we were on was a magnificent sight, and the valley--a continuation of it--ran directly down to camp. We could not see the latter but we could see where it was. There were several fires raging in the woods--some of them quite large and they seemed to be on the increase. About 1:30 we started in for camp and reached the latter place about 5:30. We brought back 15 biscuits and a box of sardines. Although we did not kill any game, our trip was a very enjoyable one....

In the next ten days the party worked some old and new regions, making some new finds. Although they were showing signs of fatigue and experiencing occasional illnesses, they gathered numerous moss agates, which are agate minerals with mosslike or treelike markings. Before returning to Fort Bridger, they entered the Millersville area where they viewed the fascinating Church Buttes, a sandstone formation eroded to resemble a church.

Thursday Sept. 21---

Worked the line of bluffs opposite camp today from the point to where they run out about 3 miles down stream. Found scarcely anything. Harger's mule followed DuBois out today (so he says) and he used her for climbing the bluffs, leaving Kate down in the valley eating grass. Mase was quite sick and could not go out. Jack had to leave work too--he was chafed on the leg so as to prevent his riding. Keasbey's pony had a sore back, so he took Jack's. Shaw shot a deer today. Shaw is one of the soldiers, a queer little dick, who has crazy fits now & then. He keeps a diary, regularly--and reads it aloud to his comrades at night. Corp. Smith is copying it--a mean trick, I think. One of his entries relates to Jack, something about his finding Jack's revolver on the day we left the post, and stating that either the "mountain air" or whiskey had had a mysterious effect upon him. Mead started out about 4 o'clock after deer and came back about 8:30 with an antelope, which he had shot....

Sunday Sept. 24--

Started off after breakfast to finish up the region I left yesterday. Jack started out with me, but had to turn back. Zieg, however, came out and joined me, soon after got to work. We did not get much, and came in by two o'clock. Went to packing up my fossils, then took a bath--the second one since I have been here. The water is too cold to take them oftener. Mead went off hunting with Smith. Page started for fishing, Peck & Prof. for fossils. The rest of the fellows stayed in camp and packed up etc. Mead & Smith returned before supper time, without anything. They went after elk. Page brought in 50 trout & Peck only 6. The latter fished in Beaver Creek, which did not turn out as well as he expected. Hunter, the teamster, who came out in Welch's place today brought me a letter from Carrie & Addie dated Sept. 16 & 17.⁴⁴

Monday Sept. 25--

Was up by sunrise this morning, and so were most of the fellows. We were bound for once to make an early start, and were all packed up & tents down before breakfast, which we had at 7 instead of half past as usual. Jack, Zieg, DuBois & Peck stayed with the wagons, to see about pitching tents, etc. They got off

⁴⁴ Lobdell's sister was Addie Wheeler Lobdell, who was ten years younger. She married William Seaman in 1886.

about 8:20. The Prof. & the rest of us started off a little later (with the exception of Mead who did not start for a half hour or more) and taking the lodge pole trail got ahead of the wagons. The Prof. wanted to look at some bluffs on the road. We were bound for Church Buttes, which the Prof. thought were 28 miles distant.⁴⁵ The road runs along past our old camp at Sage Creek--being in fact the same road we went to Henry's Fork on as far as the hill at Grizzley Buttes. There it keeps along in the [direction] to the right, crosses Sage Creek, follows down Smith's Fork, until reaching Millersville, where Smith's Fork joins Black's. Here it strikes the old emigrant road, a broad and good road, having evidently been much traveled in older times. Before going very far in the south, old Hardshell (the Prof.'s horse, so named from the fact that a hard-shell Baptist minister used to own him), became lame, having probably sprained his ankle by stepping upon a rolling stone. In consequence of this the Prof. was obliged to slacken up and we did also. About 2 o'clock we stopped for lunch, and had only been through a short time when we were surprised by the arrival of the wagons. Prof. left Hardshell with Harger, taking the latter's mule and telling him/Harger to stay with the wagons. We pushed on again till we reached Millersville.⁴⁶ This place was formerly a stage station. There are three or four good log houses there now and a good sized log stable, but the place is entirely deserted by man. Here we crossed Black's Fork, and went to look at some bluffs nearby. Not seeing any fossils we hunted for moss agates, & got quite a number--some of them very pretty, although quite small. We looked around here until we saw the wagons go by, then the Prof. told us we might push into camp, and he would look over the bluffs hurriedly. We pushed on, stopping to look for agates on the way, and before going far the Prof. caught up so we all pushed on together, & caught up with the rest of the outfit just as they were pitching camp. Our camp is situated on Black's Fork, the tents facing the stream and only a few steps from it. Had the usual difficulty in settling the position of the Prof.'s tent, but as he was here to state the spot we got that settled. The camp is at least 6 miles distant from the buttes, but as we only expect to stay till Thursday, the Prof. thought it would do very well. It was after 6, when we got in and was so dark we had to have supper by candle light.

Tuesday Sept. 26--

We all started out together today, that is, with the exception of DuBois, Peck & Keasbey, who were as usual behind. The teamsters went with us, looking for moss agates. When we reached the bluffs--about 5 miles off--not seeing any good places for fossils we commenced to look for more agates, Prof. & all. We got some very nice ones among us. Harger got the finest--the best I have ever seen, even cut. Mead & Page were with us till lunch time, then they went in, and we followed them shortly. Zieg staid with the Prof. & Harger. They did not get in until late, having first visited Church Buttes proper. They gave such a glowing account of these bluffs that all the rest of us determined to visit them tomorrow. We got to camp about 3 o'clock. Peck & DuBois came in shortly afterward. Peck & Jack went out fishing, but did not get anything. Page also went-- caught one "chub" I believe. Keasbey & I took a bath in the afternoon. Water and air both cold. The nights are not so cold here as they were on Henry's Fork--or the water either. The atmosphere still remains smoky, whether from fires in the mountains or not, I can't tell.

Wednesday Sept. 27--

Today was the last day of our Fort Bridger trip. This morning the wagons went into the post. Zieg started off before breakfast to get things ready. Keasbey, Jack, Mead, Page, DuBois and myself started off a little ahead of the wagons to go to Church Buttes. Peck intended to go but was sick and was unable to do so. We left camp at 20 minutes of 9, and reached the Buttes about 10--they were well worth the ride and did not fall at all short of the description given by the Prof.'s party.⁴⁷ The principal butte is very near the old Emigrant road--about a mile beyond the old stage station. It is about 300 feet high, the slopes very steep, and washed out were all sorts of fantastic shapes, regular pulpits, pillars & columns of all styles. It was truly a grand

⁴⁵ The Church Buttes formation is northwest of Bridger Valley about ten miles southwest of Granger, and was probably discovered by Jedediah Smith in 1824. Hamblin, *Bridger Valley*, 501.

⁴⁶ Millersville was at the junction of Smith's and Black's Forks. Sir Richard Burton passed through here in his travels and found it deserted except for one person. Hamblin, *Bridger Valley*, 510.

⁴⁷ A contemporary guidebook describes the buttes as resembling at a distance "the fluted columns of some cathedral of the olden time, standing in the midst of desolation." *Croft's Transcontinental Tourist's Guide*, 4th vol., 3d annual rev. (New York: Croft, 1872), 83.

sight and is certainly one of the queerest formations I have ever seen. We left the Butte at 10:15 and by 11, were back to our old camping place. Here we judged the distance to be not over 6 miles. By 12 we had reached Millersville, and when about 5 miles farther on we stopped for lunch. Keasbey, Jack & I were ahead but the other fellows caught up to us here, DuBois with them, much to our surprise for he had just reached the butte as we left it. We stopped about an hour for lunch, then pushed [on] for the post. We three reached it about 3 o'clock....

While the commanding officer was away from the fort, the officers enjoyed themselves with racing, drinking, and betting. Many in the Yale party joined in, even to the point of playing drunken jokes on Professor Marsh and attempting risky stunts. While more wholesome events such as church services and even baseball games did occasionally take place at Fort Bridger, drinking was a major leisure activity.⁴⁸ Lobdell seemed happy when the fort's commanding officer returned and some order again reigned. The young man apparently seldom drank alcohol, but he was not especially censorious of those who drank (even to excess), perhaps because it seemed to be accepted by the fort's occupants. His father was involved in the temperance movement and on at least one occasion, the elder Lobdell gave a speech in which he expressed the opinion that alcoholism was a disease rather than a sin and could be cured "as any other disease is cured."⁴⁹ Thus the junior Lobdell may have avoided drinking for health rather than moral reasons. In this course of action he apparently persisted. His grandson remembered that when he was close to ninety years old, a doctor advised a small glass of wine with dinner. He followed this medical advice for several weeks and then stopped, remarking that he was afraid it might be habit-forming.⁵⁰

Maj. La Motte is away from the post and the officers have been having a high old time. Recently they had a horse race, between Lieut. Rogers' horse and Dunlap's for \$25 and a keg of beer. The former won, and next Saturday the same horse is to run another race for \$100 a side with a different horse. Lieut. Rogers & Mr. Scott his clerk were out to see us today. Zieg received a box of whiskies from home, and the fellows emptied one bottle for him. They have all gone to the post except Harger and me--and at last account were at Lieut. Rogers' where Zieg reported drunk as a fool. All the fellows will probably be tight by midnight. They

say the Prof. is rather lively. Keasbey & Zieg are going to Lieut. Allmond's. He is having a wooden wedding spread, and invited the whole outfit to come and partake. I would have gone with them if I had been well and it was not so troublesome to put on my store clothes. Received quite a long letter from Carrie today, containing a brief account of their trip. They must have had a very pleasant one from all accounts.

Nearing the end of the Fort Bridger stay, Lobdell reflected that it had been much more pleasant and productive than the Kansas portion of the expedition.

Today ends properly our Bridger trip. Tomorrow we pack up fossils, and Friday we leave for Salt Lake. We have had a mighty pleasant time, in comparison with Kansas, for a trip like ours this country is infinitely better suited. With plenty of good water, plenty of eatables well cooked too, good ponies to ride, and any quantity of rare fossils, to gladden the Prof.'s eye, and bring forth many an "egad" from his lips, it is not to be wondered at that we engaged ourselves so heartily, and we all did with the exception perhaps of Mason, and he did also before he was taken sick. Started to write a letter to Addie tonight but was interrupted by Zieg, bringing Jack home in such a condition that we had to put him to bed. Rogers, Roche, Wood and other officers with all of our fellows except Peck, Harger & I were on a terrible spree. Jack got dead drunk and had to be brought home. Mead was very lively & happy. Page ditto, DuBois, Zieg & Keasbey were tolerably sober, Zieg all right in fact. I started down to the post with Zieg after we got Jack to bed--to bring the rest home but we met them on the way--and had more fun than a little with Mead & Page. It was early too, not after 10 o'clock. We met the Prof. just before meeting the fellows, and he went back with us. We had a good joke on him. He had set his watch an hour ahead and wanted to make us believe it was 11 instead of ten but we were too many for him and he had to knuckle under.

⁴⁸ For example, the men celebrated the 1872 Independence Day holiday with a baseball game as well as drinking. Thomases, "Fort Bridger: a Western Community," 188.

⁴⁹ George G. Lobdell, *Address Delivered Before the Red Ribbon Temperance Association, of Wilmington, Delaware, in Institute Hall, February 21st, 1886* (Wilmington: Ferris Brothers, 1886), 9.

⁵⁰ William W. Pusey III, interview by Mary Faith Pankin, June 6, 1993. Pusey also recalled with amusement the uncharacteristic exuberance with which his grandfather greeted the enactment of Prohibition. Apparently the already elderly man bounced up and down on his bed singing, "Oh, no, I won't get drunk no more!" at the top of his lungs, to the amazement of the whole family.

Thursday Sept. 28--

Was busy all day today, helping the Prof. pack his fossils, writing letters and packing my trunk. We filled 10 or 11 boxes with fossils, skeletons, etc. Prof., Harger & I did most of the packing. Keasbey helped some. Did not go into the post but twice. Once in the afternoon to mail my letters and get weighed--my weight was 138, gain during the trip 6 lbs. Jack weighs 144, so he is still ahead of me. Keasbey gained 3 lbs., Zieg lost 3. While at the store, the brewer came in blowing for a pistol. He and Murray had been fighting & he had drawn a pistol on Murray, so the latter said. Murray had no pistol, and the Dutchman now wanted to get one so they could fight on even terms. He was a big brawny cuss and could whip 2 or 3 like Murray--his favorite expression was "I'm a tough boy from the Rhine--me!" Murray was one of our escort, he already had a black nose which I suppose the Dutchman had given him. Everybody around the post nearly was drunk. Major La Motte returned about our dinner time and I presume things will go better hereafter. Jack, Zieg, Mead & DuBois went on another spree tonight. Jack started in with Peck to sleep in the hospital, but afterwards went to Capt. Clift's quarters, and with the aid of the fellows above named--and Rogers, Roche and the Capt. emptied 2 barrels of beer. About 12 o'clock they came out to serenade the Prof.; had a song arranged expressly for the occasion, and they sang tolerably well, beating on the tent, near where the Prof.'s head would come, in order to make sure of awakening him. Much to their surprise & disgust however the Prof. was not in his tent, so they loafed around, burnt up a barrel and a box, for a camp fire, and finally the Prof. came out. Then they had it over again. Capt. Clift was drunk as a fool--the rest knew what they were about, I judge, although Mead and Roche were going to swim up Black's Fork on a bet, and Roche had stripped himself naked and Mead to his undershirt when Bishop, the officer of the day stopped their foolery. Keasbey stayed home in the evening, writing letters.

Despite some alcoholic excesses, the men had good reason to feel satisfaction from their five weeks of hard work. From this expedition in the Bridger basin, eleven boxes of fossils eventually arrived at Yale.⁵¹

The group made an early start the next morning for Salt Lake City, where they would stay until October 6. They boarded the Union Pacific Railroad, which stopped at Carter's Station, several miles from the fort,

where an ugly red building for passengers and freight had been built in 1868. Judge Carter had been unsuccessful in influencing the line to run trains closer to Fort Bridger, supposedly because a principal planner could not get whiskey there on Sunday and took his revenge.⁵² The train went through Wasatch, Utah, to Ogden, where they changed cars to go to Salt Lake City.⁵³

On the way they passed through some magnificent and intriguing canyon scenery with which Lobdell was extremely impressed. A contemporary guidebook also praised these landmarks in glowing terms, calling Echo Canyon's beauties "so many, so majestic, so awe inspiring in their sublimity," and claiming that Weber Canyon possessed "fresh objects of wonder and interest ... on either hand."⁵⁴

Friday Sept. 29--

Was up at 5 o'clock this morning. We had a thunder storm, just about that time but it did not last long, and did no damage. The wagons came shortly after 6, and we loaded them and got them started. Then after breakfast we went down to the fort, bid everyone around good bye--and started for the station. We got there full[y] half an hour before the train and got all our baggage attended to. Rogers & Roche were with us. About 10:30 we all got aboard and started for Ogden--getting seats in the Pullman car. At 1:30 we stopped at Wasatch for grub. Had a couple of little Chinese to wait on the table, they did it mighty well, too. After leaving Wasatch, the road passes through the most magnificent scenery in the line of the U.P. road. Soon after leaving we entered the famous Echo Canyon. The grade is down all the way, and the scenery is truly grand. On one side the hills, or more properly speaking, mountains, arise with abrupt declivity, but a few feet from the track, and in some cases huge masses

⁵¹ Schuchert and LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 124-125.

⁵² Gowans and Campbell, *Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness*, p. 149; Uinta County Museum Board, *Our Railroad Heritage: the Union Pacific in Wyoming* ([Evanston, Wyoming], n.d.), 15-16. For a summary of the building of the Union Pacific in Wyoming in the late 1860s, see T.A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 36-63.

⁵³ The Union Pacific started service from the east to Ogden in March, 1869, and the Utah Central Railroad reached from Ogden to Salt Lake City in January of 1870. Deon C. Greer, et al., *Atlas of Utah*, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1981), 97.

⁵⁴ *Croft's Trans-continental Tourist*, 6th vol., 5th annual rev. (New York: Croft, 1874), 78, 80.

of rocks a thousand feet high, really overhang the cars, as they speed along. On the other side the hills are more sloping, and less rocky. A stream runs down the canyon, the road crossing first to one side and then the other. Every once in a while a side will appear, and in it, can be seen all sorts of colored leaves. I noticed one spot in particular. There was a clump of bright crimson bushes meeting in a grove of dark & light yellow cottonwood. The effect of the contrast with the dark and somber background was beautiful. Among the most characteristic points in this canyon are Castle Rock and Pulpit Rock.⁵⁵ The latter I missed seeing, but the former I had a glimpse of. The rock arises in kind of terraces, with corner turrets & pinnacles, to the height of about 600 ft. from the track, and on the very top, a flagstaff had been planted. The likeness to a castle, was truly very striking. We entered Echo Canyon through a tunnel. At the terminus of it is Echo City, which looks like a very flourishing little place.⁵⁶ We passed quite a number of nice looking villages. The land is cultivated with the aid of irrigation, so as to produce wheat and all sorts of vegetables, I judge. Shortly after leaving Echo Canyon we pass through a narrow gorge--into Weber Canyon. The scenery in this is much more curious and imposing than in Echo. The canyon is more narrow, and the Weber River--a tributary of Bear river--which runs down the canyon adds much to its beauty.⁵⁷ The rock at first is apparently the same as that in Echo Canyon but it soon changes in color from reddish to a dirty white or gray. The Thousand Mile Tree, we struck shortly after entering.

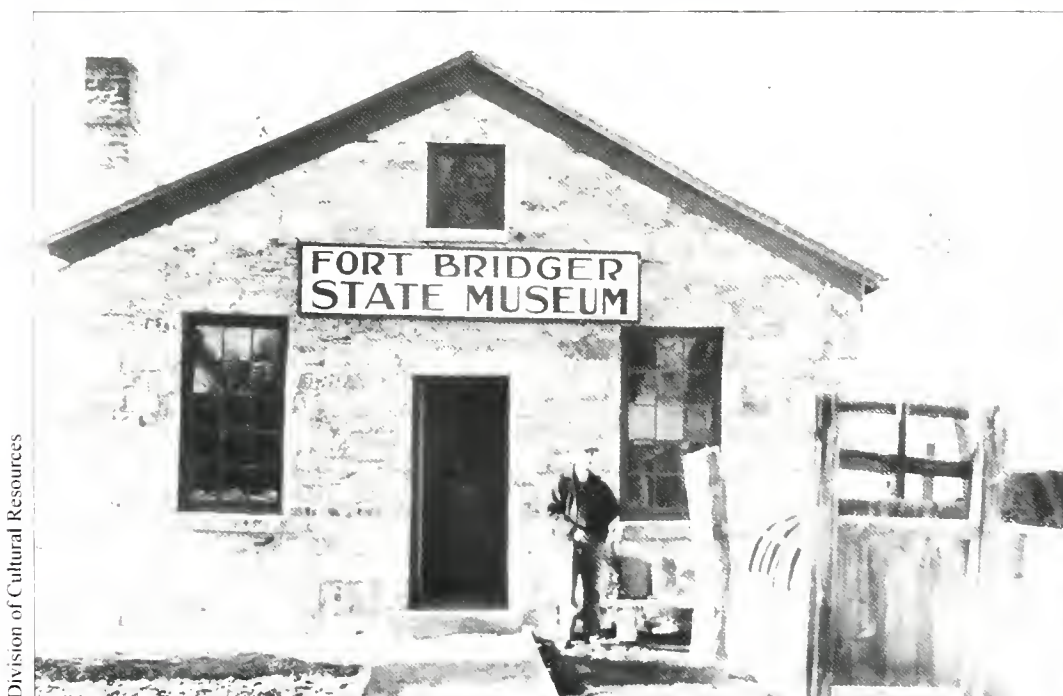
It is merely an old tree standing alone--with a sign board on it to the effect that it is "The 1000 Mile Tree" meaning 1000 miles from Omaha.⁵⁸ But the most remarkable thing in the whole canyon is the Devils Slide. This consists of two upright walls of rock running down a steep slope about 300 feet high--with a space between of 4-6 feet. The walls are parallel through their whole extent, and are of nearly equal height throughout. There are numbers of these parallel walls about this neighborhood, but this particular one is more remarkable than the others, and this one has received the name of the "Devils Slide." Probably next in point of interest is the "Devils Gate." This is where the Weber cuts its way through a narrow passage in the rock, bending around so as to make a letter S. The channel

⁵⁵ Echo Canyon has red sandstone walls, at some points rising 1,000 feet, with many strange shapes carved. "On the canyon wall ... strata of light-colored conglomerate sandstone ... contain fossils of Cretaceous plants, 55 to 95 million years old." Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Utah, *Utah: a Guide to the State*, American Guide Series (New York: Hastings House, 1941), 356.

⁵⁶ While the railroad was being constructed, Echo had saloons, gambling halls, and brothels, and workers could disappear, never to be heard from again. *Ibid.*, 357. *Croft's Trans-continental Tourist* damns the town with this faint praise: "This city is not very inviting unless you like to hunt and fish." (p. 79).

⁵⁷ Some of the walls in the Weber Canyon rise to 4,000 feet. The Union Pacific gave Mormon settlers through their leader Brigham Young the contract for grading down both Echo and Weber Canyons in 1868-1869. *Utah. a Guide*, 358.

⁵⁸ *Croft's Trans-continental Tourist's Guide* identifies the tree as a pine and predicts optimistically that it is destined to be "an index of the coming greatness of a regenerated country." (p. 94).



Division of Cultural Resources

The Wyoming Historical Landmarks Commission purchased the site of Fort Bridger in 1928 and, three years later, the commission established the historical museum at the site. On June 25, 1933, an estimated 7,000 people attended the dedication ceremonies of Fort Bridger as a state historical landmark and museum. This photo, taken in the early years of the museum's existence, is undated.

of the river runs directly through a part of the mountain, leaving a portion outside, about 50 feet high. It issues from this passage with considerable velocity and goes bubbling and boiling over the stones of its bed till it soon again regains a quieter channel.⁵⁹ The R.R. crosses the river on a bridge just after it leaves the "gate." Soon after this the mountains dwindle down on the left, and the road enters the Salt Lake Valley, soon reaching Ogden. There are several neat villages in the canyon the principal of which is Weber where there is quite an extensive plain. We arrived at Ogden about 5 o'clock by Cheyenne time and there changed cars, for [Salt] Lake City. We reached the latter place in 2 or 3 hours....

United States troops withdrew from Fort Bridger in 1878 but returned in 1880, largely because of Judge Carter's influence. After his death in 1881, troop strength fluctuated in response to perceived need. Finally on November 6, 1890 Fort Bridger ceased to be a military post.⁶⁰ The judge's widow remained at the fort, receiving title to it in 1896. When she died in 1904, the title passed among various Carter family members until 1928. Then a deed to the state was placed in escrow until the purchase price could be paid. In 1933 the fort was dedicated as a Wyoming Historical Landmark and Museum.⁶¹

Meanwhile, the Yale party made the most of a brief stay in Salt Lake City. Although they were unsuccessful in their attempts to meet the great Mormon leader Brigham Young, they saw a play starring Jean Lander at the Salt Lake Theatre, heard the famous preacher and politician Orson Pratt speak in the Mormon Tabernacle, floated on the surface of the Great Salt Lake, and had their photographs taken by the eminent photographer Charles Roscoe Savage.⁶² Leaving October 6, they traveled to Oregon by way of Idaho, passing through Boise and visiting Shoshone Falls on the Snake River. This sight caused Lobdell to write that October 7 was one of the most memorable days of his young life.

By October 13 they were in Oregon. At Canyon City Marsh had arranged to join his correspondent Thomas Condon (1822-1907), a Congregational clergyman and later professor of geology at the University of Oregon.⁶³ By November 9 Condon, whom Lobdell liked and respected, had helped the men to uncover enough fossils in the John Day Valley to fill eleven more boxes to send back to Yale.⁶⁴ This concluded the paleontological work of the expedition, and for the remaining six weeks the men were tourists. From Condon's home town, The Dalles, they journeyed by Columbia River steamer to

San Francisco, arriving on November 27. Lobdell was impressed with the city's charms. He was not excited by his brief foray into Chinatown, but he enjoyed visits to the famed Cliff House restaurant and was enchanted by the flora and fauna of Woodward's Gardens.⁶⁵

Lobdell left for Wilmington by train on December 12, a trip that turned out to be quite arduous on account of heavy snowfall, especially in Wyoming. Such snowfall there was not unusual. Later that winter, Major La Motte wrote to his mother that Fort Bridger was completely isolated for several weeks and ran low on food supplies.⁶⁶ Reaching home on the morning of December 23, Lobdell just missed the spectacular December 22 opening ceremony for Wilmington's new Masonic Temple and Grand Opera House, which his family attended.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, Professor Marsh and several others sailed back by way of Panama, arriving home January 14. The expedition had cost its participants close to

⁵⁹ *Croft's Trans-continental Tourist's Guide* describes this as a seething cauldron of waters." (p. 95).

⁶⁰ Ellison, *Fort Bridger — a Brief History*, 56-59. For example, in 1884 an Inspector General recommended leaving the fort because of poor climate and lack of military necessity.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁶² For a biography of Brigham Young see Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). For a biography of Jean Lander (1829-1903), the widow of the Union general Frederick Lander and former child actress, see William C. Young, *Famous Actors and Actresses on the American Stage: Documents of American Theater History* (New York: Bowker, 1975), 2: 650-654. For a biography of Savage (1832-1909) with many photographic reproductions, see Bradley W. Richards, *The Savage View: Charles Savage, Pioneer Mormon Photographer* (Nevada City, Calif.: Carl Mautz, 1995).

⁶³ For a full length biography of Condon see Robert D. Clark, *The Odyssey of Thomas Condon: Irish Immigrant, Frontier Missionary, Oregon Geologist* (Eugene: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989). For a more personal view, see Ellen Condon McCornack, *Thomas Condon: Pioneer Geologist of Oregon* (Eugene: University Press, 1928).

⁶⁴ Schuchert and LeVene, *O.C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 125.

⁶⁵ For a history of the series of Cliff House restaurants see Ariel Rubissow, *Cliff House & Land's End: San Francisco's Seaside Retreat* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Park Association, 1993). For a description of Woodward's Gardens, which were open from 1866-1891, see Doris Muscatine, *Old San Francisco: the Biography of a City from Early Days to the Earthquake* (New York: Putnam, 1975), 232-233, 183, 340; "The Animals Must Go: Woodward's Menagerie to be Declared a Public Nuisance," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 30, 1891; "Selling for a Song: Old Curios at Woodward's Gardens," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 7, 1893.

⁶⁶ La Motte Family Papers, La Motte to "Mother," Jan. 21-Feb. 16, 1872.

⁶⁷ *Wilmington Daily Commercial*, Dec. 23, 1871.

\$15,000.⁶⁸ Marsh had every right to feel a sense of accomplishment, since the group had added many specimens. In the John Day region alone they uncovered many examples of the three-toed horse, *Protohippus* and *Neohipparion*, which Marsh credited to Page, Mead, Harger, and Lobdell.⁶⁹

Marsh led several other western expeditions before relying on others to collect his fossils for him. The 1872 expedition visited Kansas and Wyoming and brought back some excellent examples of toothed birds. That year Marsh was caught in a huge, frightening but exhilarating buffalo stampede, probably caused by the party's hunting attempts.⁷⁰ A larger party in 1873 worked in Nebraska, Wyoming (including Fort Bridger), Idaho and Oregon, and sent back over five tons of fossils, including many horses.

Work on the Peabody Museum began in 1874. After initial reluctance, Marsh was lured to the Badlands of South Dakota in the fall of 1874 by stories of fossil finds. The Sioux refused permission to cross their reservation at first, but the professor finally persuaded Chief Red Cloud to let the group pass by promising to bring complaints about dishonest government agents to the President. Marsh relished the ensuing political scandal that eventually brought about the resignation of the Commissioner for Indian Affairs. In later years the chief was Marsh's guest in New Haven.⁷¹

In 1882 Marsh became the first vertebrate paleontologist of the U.S. Geological Survey. He served as president of the National Academy of Sciences from 1883 to 1895. An unfortunate feud, however, was to mar his record of achievement. Starting in the 1870s and continuing for two decades, he and Edward Drinker Cope (1840-1897), another distinguished paleontologist, carried on a rivalry which occasionally erupted into acrimonious attacks against each other.⁷²

Marsh never married and lived alone in a grand eighteen-room house decorated with art objects and appropriately, with western memorabilia. He died of pneumonia in 1899 after a few days' illness. He left his entire estate to Yale University.⁷³

For his part, Lobdell followed the path that had been laid out for him. In 1872 he joined the family business, the Lobdell Car Wheel Company, as a chemist. He took on increasingly responsible positions, including serving as Secretary and Treasurer from 1886 to 1894. From 1914 until a few months before his death in 1942, he was the company's president.

In 1882 the company expanded and moved to a new site on the Christina River where, in addition to carwheels, it made chilled rolls for paper machines and

flour mills. Later, in the 1880s, the enterprise employed more than 650 men.⁷⁴ In 1904 it resisted a suit to make it merge with the National Car Wheel Company. Failure to shift from chilled iron to steel for wheels eventually resulted in financial reverses.⁷⁵ In 1949 the company was acquired by the United Engineering and Foundry Company of Pittsburgh, which closed it in 1965.⁷⁶

Like his father before him, Lobdell was involved in civic and charitable activities. For example, he served for many years as president and benefactor of the Minquadale Home, an old-age home founded by the senior George Lobdell in 1891 in the former family summer residence in Minquadale, just south of Wilmington.⁷⁷

On the personal side, he married Eva Wollaston (1857-1932), daughter of Joshua and Esther Wollaston in 1878. The couple had five children. Three, George Granville III (b. 1887), Edith (b. 1880) and Ethel (b. 1884), survived to adulthood.

Lobdell's grandson William W. Pusey III recalled growing up in the family home at 1605 Broom Street, where the widowed daughters Edith Pusey and Ethel Seaman had returned with their children.⁷⁸ It was a harmonious and well-run household. Lobdell professed to be very happily married. Unexpectedly widowed,

⁶⁸ Schuchert and LeVene, *O. C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 126.

⁶⁹ Lull, "The Yale Collection of Fossil Horses," 4.

⁷⁰ For Marsh's own account of this event, showing his zest for rough excitement, see "A Ride for Life in a Buffalo Herd," ed. James Penick, Jr., *American Heritage* 21 (June 1970): 46-47, 77.

⁷¹ Lanham, *The Bone Hunters*, 146-153.

⁷² For detailed discussions of their points of dispute, see *Ibid.*; Elizabeth Noble Shor, *The Fossil Feud Between E.D. Cope and O.C. Marsh* (Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1974); and Robert Plate, *The Dinosaur Hunters: Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward D. Cope* (New York: David McKay, 1964).

⁷³ Schuchert and LeVene, *O. C. Marsh, Pioneer in Paleontology*, 330-354.

⁷⁴ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Delaware, 1609-1888* (Philadelphia: L.J. Richards, 1888; Westminster, Md.: Family Line Publications, 1990), 2: 775-777.

⁷⁵ Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 138, 159.

⁷⁶ W. Stewart Allmond, interview by John Scafidi and Faith Pizor, June 10 and July 1, 1969, transcription, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Del., accession 2026.

⁷⁷ Obituary, *Wilmington Journal-Every Evening*, June 8, 1942; *Charter, By-laws, Rules and Regulations of Minquadale Home of Wilmington, Delaware* (Wilmington: John M. Rogers Press, 1896), 3-16; Nancy L. Mohr, *Gilpin Hall, an Enduring Vision* (Wilmington: Gilpin Hall, 1994), 12-13.

⁷⁸ For background on the Pusey family and the family business Pusey and Jones, see Mary Faith Pankin, "Charles W. Pusey's Voyage to Trinidad and the Orinoco in 1890," *Delaware History* 26 (1994): 20-51.

he was heard to exclaim about his marriage during these sad last years, "Married over fifty years — and never a cross word!"⁷⁹

He had one mild eccentricity. He would occasionally retreat alone to his library to read, in French, his collection of Balzac novels, then considered in questionable taste.⁸⁰ A family photograph of his ninetieth birthday shows a venerable-looking bearded gentleman blowing out a vast array of candles on his celebratory cake.

Although Pusey did not recall his grandfather speaking in detail about his part in the Yale expedition, Lobdell did retain souvenirs of his explorations. In 1940 archeologists called upon him at his office in the hope of recovering Paleolithic blades that had been lost after being found in 1882 by workers digging a slip for the new car wheel works. He was able to help them in their quest, speaking as well of his own collection of western artifacts. One of the visitors described him charmingly as follows:

Mr. Lobdell, who had then passed his ninetieth birthday, was feeble, but his memory was clear....He seemed like a character from a Galsworthy novel as he arose to greet us, stroking his long gray beard. In faltering words he told us how the cache had been found, and went on to say that from time to time other stone articles had been dug up on the property....When we returned to the office, pausing once or twice on the way back for the old gentleman to catch his breath, he asked if we cared to see some of the mineral specimens he had collected in his younger days while on a tour in the West....The old gentleman pointed out a wooden staircase leading to the unoccupied second floor of the old office building, but he remained behind after excusing himself with polite dignity. We learned later that because of his infirmity he had not climbed these stairs in many years.⁸¹

In a large cupboard the researchers found, along with the blades they were seeking, carefully preserved specimens of western quartz, crystal, petrified wood, and other minerals. We can only guess at the seventy-year-old memories that surrounded Lobdell after the visitors departed: of Professor O. C. Marsh and his

expeditionary companions--now all dead--of Judge Carter, Jack Robertson, the high spirited officers and men of Fort Bridger, and of the small but honorable role he himself had played in the history of American paleontology.⁸²

⁷⁹ Eva Lobdell was also involved in civic-minded pursuits, such as the Home for Aged Women and the New Century Club. Obituary, *Wilmington Evening Journal*, Dec. 19, 1932. For a discussion of the importance for elite women of the New Century Club, see Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 145-146, 153; and Gail Stanislow, "Domestic Feminism in Wilmington: the New Century Club, 1889-1917," *Delaware History* 22 (1986-1987): 158-185.

⁸⁰ William W. Pusey III, interview, June 6, 1993.

⁸¹ C. A. Weslager, *Delaware's Buried Past: a Story of Archaeological Adventure* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944; New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1968), 107-108.

⁸² Lobdell had the distinction of being the oldest living graduate of the Sheffield Scientific School from April 20, 1942, until his death on May 7. "Obituary Record of Graduates Deceased During the Year Ending July 1, 1942," *Bulletin of Yale University* 101 (1943):163.

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Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

John Ford: Hollywood's Old Master. By Ronald L. Davis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. xv + 395 pages. *Illustrations, bibliography.* Cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$14.95.

Petulant John Ford asserted that "There is no secret about directing, except good common sense and a belief in what you are doing" (p. 4). Ford, a six-time Academy Award winner for best director, was an enigma to his contemporaries in the film business and to film historians. This new biography probes Ford's public and private lives to explain why, despite notable success, his life was filled with unhappiness and inner turmoil. Davis provides a record about the legendary and complex director using extensive interviews of people who knew and worked with Ford in the motion picture industry.

Davis traces Ford's life from his childhood in Maine, where he was exposed to an Irish Catholic background, to the early days of silent motion pictures in California, and to his entry into sound motion pictures and fame. During his early career, Ford directed many silent westerns in which he learned how to be a "visualist" with the camera, relying on action of the actors and the landscape, not the spoken word, to transmit drama or meaning. His talents for telling the grand historical accomplishments of America began to develop that would later make him the dean of the American western and elevate this popular genre to epic greatness.

Ford directed more than sixty silent films, many of them profit makers for the major studios that he worked for. With the advent of sound Ford was one of the few directors of his day who made the transition to this new medium. His career continued to prosper with his first Academy Award in 1935 for *The Informer* and in 1940 for *The Grapes of Wrath*. A proven success not only at the box office but one judged by his peers, Ford's prominence as one of the dominant directors in Hollywood became firmly established.

But Ford's turbulent life on and off the movie set did not match his professional success. His cruel and strange behavior towards crew and actors became legendary. Ford had a disappointing family life with his wife and children creating another confused aspect of his eccentric personality. When not working himself into a physical breakdown with directing, he went on notorious drinking binges that lasted for weeks until bed confinement sobered him up. It was said that you either loved John Ford or hated him immensely. Even to interview the man could become a harrowing experience for anyone not ready for his sarcastic personality.

Ford's happiest days were during World War II while serving in the Navy. He found that the male-dominated military life provided meaning and honor, something Hollywood could never do. Ford asserted that his promotion to admiral meant more to him than any of his Academy Awards.

Davis chronicles all of Ford's movies. Some are examined in-depth while others have little or no analysis at all. This unevenness of interpretation demonstrates Davis's deficiency of not being a film historian. If one is seeking a full delineation of Ford's film, this book will not provide that. This biography also fails to explain the man John Ford. Davis's tenuous conjecture that Ford suppressed a homosexual nature, causing his peculiar personality, is just theory and lacks any documented evidence. This kind of narrative prompts the reader to question any appraisal of Ford's life in Davis's book. Documentation is also surprisingly missing, with no end notes or bibliography. There is a bibliographical sources listing, which is totally inadequate for any corroboration or future research. This type of historical work is not only annoying, but troubling for the future of professional historical writing.

On the positive side, Davis's abundant use of anecdotes about Ford's character and life paints a man of baffling proportions. A more concise account about John Ford, though, is still to be written that will illuminate the life of this troubled genius.

Heyward Schrock
Wyoming State Museum

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Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert, UW Libraries

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If you have any questions about these materials or the Hebard Collection, contact Tamsen Hert by phone at (307) 766-6245; by email, thert@uwyo.edu or access the Hebard HomePage at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>.

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Wyoming Pictures



Marion W. Gieseke (left), radio engineer, and Robert C. Horne, executive secretary to Bishop N. S. Thomas of the Episcopal Church, are shown in the broadcast studio of Wyoming's first radio station, KFBU Laramie. The station first went on the air Nov. 5, 1922, when the station equipment was used to contact officials about a train wreck while other means of communication were inoperative due to a severe blizzard. It was a one-time broadcast, however. The 25-watt station began to broadcast regularly beginning with the Feb. 17, 1924, Sunday church services. The station was expanded with funds provided by Mrs. E. H. Harriman, widow of the Union Pacific Railroad board chairman, after Bishop Thomas told her about the station's role in the 1922 snowstorm and how it may have saved the lives of railroad crews. A young radio technician was electrocuted while installing the new more powerful equipment. After 1926, the station, located in the basement of the Cathedral in Laramie, broadcast a daily weather forecast at 12:30 p.m., along with regular church programs. Strapped for funds in 1927, the church entered into a joint operating agreement to broadcast University of Wyoming events. Gieseke, pictured above, was responsible for setting up the first "remote broadcast" of a state football championship when the station broadcast Worland's 19-0 victory over Cheyenne on a neutral field in Douglas in 1927. Following Bishop Thomas' resignation and changes in radio broadcasting rules, the call letters were changed to KWYO with the university serving as the primary owner. Lack of money caused the station to close permanently in 1929. The story of the station was told in "Top of the World Broadcasts: Wyoming's Early Radio," by Howard Lee Wilson, *Annals of Wyoming*, Spring, 1971. (Division of Cultural Resources photograph)



Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Vol. 70, No. 2

Spring 1998



Special Issue
Trains Across Wyoming

About the Cover Art

"John 'Portugee' Phillips' Ride"

The painting by Dave Paulley, reproduced on the cover of this issue, depicts the most famous ride in Wyoming history. Phillips was a civilian en route to the goldfields of Montana on the Bozeman Trail. He was at Fort Phil Kearny when, on Dec. 21, 1866, Capt. William Fetterman and 81 other men were killed by Indians near the fort. Phillips was one of two civilian volunteers sent to Fort Laramie for reinforcements in the wake of the disaster. After riding some 235 miles, mostly through winter storms, Phillips arrived at Fort Laramie about 10 p.m., on Christmas night, four days and nights after leaving Fort Phil Kearny. The painting is part of the centennial collection commissioned by the Wyoming State Historical Society in the 1980s. The map on the back cover shows the major trails across Wyoming. Suzanne Luhr, TRC Mariah Associates, created the map specially for this issue.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Special Trails Issue

Three articles in this issue relate to emigrant trails across Wyoming. Susan Badger Doyle, recognized authority on the Bozeman Trail, describes the trail and its various routes used by goldseekers and others from 1863 to 1868.

James A. Lowe writes about the Bridger Trail. Lowe's full-length monograph on the Bridger Trail was published recently by Arthur Clark and Company.

Rosemary G. Palmer explains how the "Goldilocks myth" evolved from Oregon Trail stories. Palmer's doctoral dissertation, from which this article is derived, examines the lives and memories of children who traveled the trail.

A fourth article in this special series, a history of the Overland (Cherokee) Trail, will appear in a future issue of Annals.

William R. Supernaugh is author of this issue's "Wyoming People" feature. The subject is well-known Yellowstone gamekeeper Harry Yount. Our usual book review section, ably edited by Carl Hallberg, contains reviews of several recent books about Western history. Also, Tami Hert provides another in the series of bibliographies of Wyoming and Western items now available at the University of Wyoming's Coe Library.

Annals still seeks submissions for the "Wyoming Memories" feature. If you, a friend or member of your family wishes to write a first-person reminiscence of some aspect of Wyoming history, give me a call or write me about your proposal. This feature is an opportunity for readers to gain, first-hand, information about the history of the state that can come from nowhere but from the hand of the person who was there. Previous "Wyoming Memories" have included accounts of the grasshopper scourge in northeastern Wyoming in the 1930s, the "blizzard of 1949," and oral history accounts of Wyoming pioneers.

Write us.



Phil Roberts, Editor

THE BOZEMAN TRAIL, 1863-1868

by Susan Badger Doyle

The Bozeman Trail began as an emigrant gold-rush trail. First attempted in 1863, it was opened in 1864 as a shortcut from the main Platte overland road to the Montana goldfields and was closed four years later as a consequence of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Its five-hundred-mile route left the North Platte River at three different places between Fort Laramie and Casper, went northwest across the Powder River Basin along the eastern base of the Big Horn Mountains, crossed the Big Horn River just below the canyon, went up the Yellowstone River Valley, and entered the Gallatin Valley in through Bozeman Pass.

From the beginning, the Bozeman Trail had the potential to become a major link between the central overland road on the Platte River and the burgeoning settlements in Montana. It was shorter and more direct than the main routes, it was well-watered, and it proved to be a good wagon road. But there was one major problem. It went through the Powder River Basin, the region east of the Big Horn Mountains occupied and contested by Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes. The Bozeman Trail was an emigrant trail for only one year, and then a military campaign followed by military occupation transformed it from a civilian road to Montana Territory into an exclusively military road to Forts Reno, Phil Kearny, and C. F. Smith. Consequently, although the Bozeman Trail was the last great western emigrant trail, it became popularly known as the "Bloody Bozeman," the military road that initiated the Indian wars on the Northern Plains.

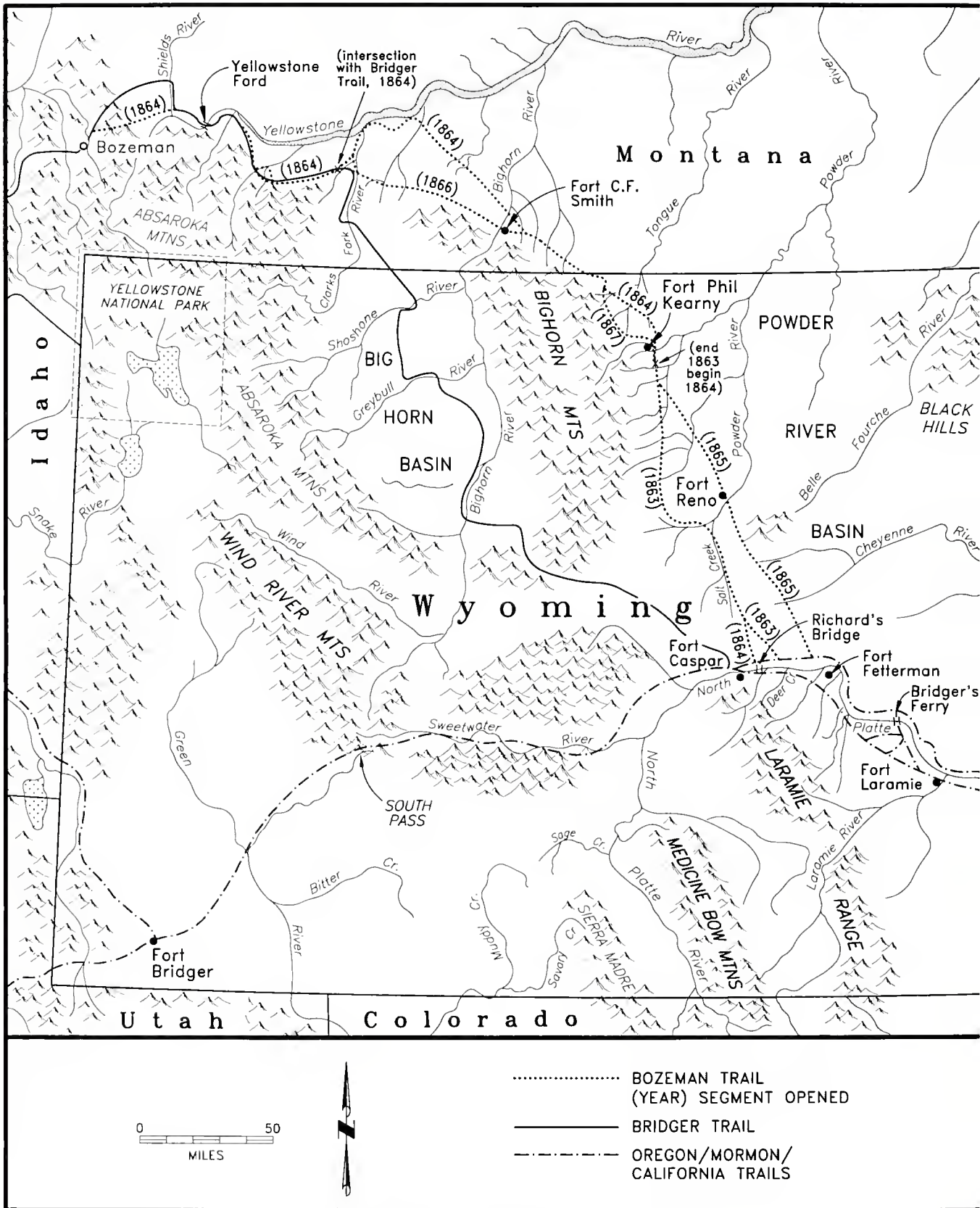
The routes of the Bozeman Trail are more accurately a series of segments that were interwoven, in places overlapping, in a dazzling array of continual change.

How, when, and why the routes of the Bozeman Trail changed embodies the fascinating story of the frontier process. As an integral part of American western expansion, the trail's routes resulted from the interaction of the emigrant experience, frontier boosterism, territorial politics, evolving U.S.-Indian relations, and the tragic consequences of military intervention. Moreover, the physical routes of the trail can only be accurately and precisely determined by examining the travel diaries written by Bozeman Trail travelers.¹

The story of the Bozeman trail begins in 1863. At the beginning of the year in Bannack in the Beaverhead Valley, two opportunistic frontier entrepreneurs realized the potential advantages of a shorter route to the newly discovered goldfields. John Bozeman and John Jacobs have been described as partners in the venture to open a new road, but in actuality, Bozeman had the broader vision and was the leader, while Jacobs, ostensibly the guide, soon dropped from historical view. As a result, today Jacobs has been all but forgotten and Bozeman is legendary.

In March John M. Bozeman, John M. Jacobs, and Jacobs's young daughter Emma started east from Bannack to scout a shorter route from the Platte road

¹ To provide the documentation needed to determine the routes of the Bozeman Trail, the full texts of thirty-three diaries and reminiscences by travelers in the trail's formative period will be published in an annotated collection; Susan Badger Doyle, ed., *Journeys to the Land of Gold: Travelers on the Bozeman Trail, 1863-1866*, 2 vols. (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, forthcoming). Only a few of the source documents to be included in the book are cited in this article.



Map by Suzanne Luhr, TRC Mariah Associates

to the mining camps.² They were next seen on May 11 on the east bank of the Big Horn River by James Stuart's prospecting party on the west bank. It is not known how the Bozeman party got there, but during the two months since leaving Bannack, they may have explored the Big Horn Basin as a possible route and ruled it out. When they realized they had been seen, Bozeman and Jacobs fled from the prospectors, thinking they were Indians. A couple days later they encountered an Indian war party, whom they each later variously identified as Sioux or Crow. The Indians took their belongings but let them go with three broken-down ponies. As the Bozeman party continued southward, they probably followed visible Indian trails.³ They reached the small military and trading post at Deer Creek on the south side of the North Platte River at the end of May.

Bozeman and Jacobs set up a camp near the settlement at Deer Creek to recruit a train to lead over their new route to the Beaverhead Valley. By early July, they had attracted a relatively small number of emigrants from the massive 1863 migration. On July 6 a train of forty-six wagons and eighty-nine men, some with families, left the Deer Creek camp, guided by Bozeman, Jacobs, and local resident Rafael Gallegos.⁴ The emigrants considered all three men to be their guides, but most likely Gallegos, the one most familiar with the region, was the actual guide.

The Bozeman train crossed to the north side of the North Platte River and turned off the north-side emigrant road about three miles west of Deer Creek. They traveled northwest on an Indian trail to the head of today's Salt Creek. They continued down the dry bed of Salt Creek to the Powder River. This route from Deer Creek to the Powder River was surveyed in 1860 by J. D. Hutton, the topographer with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1859-1860 expedition that explored the Yellowstone drainage, commanded by Captain William F. Reynolds and Lieutenant Henry E. Maynadier.⁵

Hutton noticed several Indian trails in the region but wrote that the trail going down the bed of Salt Creek was the best one when the creek was dry. He described two fords at the Powder River, noting the upper ford about two hundred yards above the mouth of Salt Creek was the best. He reported the abandoned Portuguese houses were three miles due west of the upper ford. On his return to the North Platte, he crossed an old lodge trail on the divide which appeared to keep a westerly course toward the vicinity of Richard's Bridge, east of Casper. This was likely the trail traversed by the 1864 Bozeman Trail trains.

After crossing the Powder River, Bozeman's train went up the north side about ten miles and turned up the east side of North Fork Powder River about five miles to where the fork bends westward. Leaving the North Fork, the train went generally north over rolling hills, along the base of the Big Horn mountains. Their route was many miles west of the military route of the trail opened in 1865. This earlier route approximates that of U.S. Highway 87 between Kaycee and Buffalo.

On July 20 the train crossed Clear Creek just east of Buffalo, went north about four miles, and camped on Rock Creek, about 140 miles from Deer Creek. A large party of Cheyenne and some Sioux warriors came to the corral and confronted the emigrants, threatening to kill them if they continued on. After discussing their options and sending messengers back to Deer Creek for military assistance, the train returned to the main overland road. Their route went up Middle Fork Powder River and then went south through Red Wall country and across the divide to the overland road. Their route was virtually identical to Reynolds's route in fall 1859. Both parties reached the overland road near Red Buttes, a few miles west of Casper. At the same time the train was traveling toward the main road, Bozeman and nine companions on horseback took a more direct route across the mountains to the Montana settlements.

² The best works to date on John Bozeman and the opening of the trail are Merrill G. Burlingame, *John M. Bozeman, Montana Trailmaker* (1941, 1971; Bozeman: Museum of the Rockies, Montana State University, 1983); and John S. Gray, "Blazing the Bridger and Bozeman Trails," *Annals of Wyoming* 49 (Spring 1977): 23-51.

³ A map showing Indian trails in the Powder River Basin is in Margaret Brock Hanson, ed., *Powder River Country* (Cheyenne: Frontier Printing, 1971), 6.

⁴ Diarists Samuel Word and Cicero Card provide detailed information for the route of the 1863 Bozeman-Jacobs train: Samuel Word, Diary, SC 284, Montana Historical Society, Helena; published in *Contributions to the Montana Historical Society* 8 (1917): 37-92; and Cicero Card, Diary, MSS. CC-53, Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant.

⁵ Although the reports were not published until 1868, the Yellowstone expedition immensely influenced the routes of the Bozeman and Bridger Trails, particularly because Jim Bridger was the chief guide. For Hutton's survey of the Salt Creek route, see J. D. Hutton, "Reconnaissance for a Wagon Road from the Platte to Powder River," in W. F. Reynolds, *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River, 1859-60*, (40th Cong., 2d sess., 1868, S. Ex. Doc. 77, Serial 1317), 170-74. Maynadier was so impressed with the potential for a road through the area that he published a pamphlet in 1864 essentially describing the Bozeman Trail; Henry E. Maynadier, *Memoir of the Country About the Heads of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, With a Plan for Connecting it by a Military Road with the Platte Road* (Washington, D. C.: Gibson Bros., 1864).

arriving well ahead of the rest of the train.⁶ Although there still was no Bozeman Trail at the end of 1863, Bozeman's failed attempt set in motion events that led to its establishment the next year.

Sometime in spring 1864, John Bozeman went back to the Platte road by way of Salt Lake City and arrived at Richard's Bridge by early June. He set up a camp near the bridge to organize a wagon train to go over his proposed shortcut. Soon others were doing the same, and four trains departed from the north side of Richard's Bridge that summer.⁷ The trains were large and well-organized. Each is known by the name of its captain—Hurlbut, Bozeman, Townsend, and Coffinbury—and approximately 1,500 people and 450 wagons traversed the trail in these four trains. The first two trains developed the route used by the last two, so that at the end of the season, the Bozeman Trail was established.

In spite of Bozeman's earlier presence at Richard's Bridge, the first train to depart was led by Allen Hurlbut, a prospector-turned-entrepreneur much like Bozeman.⁸ Hurlbut began gathering his train as he traveled along the Platte road. He arrived at the bridge on June 11 and set up a camp to collect a larger train, apparently convincing a growing number to go with him on the new route with reports of rich gold fields they would encounter along the way. While the train waited in camp, Hurlbut explored the proposed route north of the river. Hurlbut's train of 124 wagons and 438 people left Richard's Bridge on June 16.⁹ Hurlbut had no guide, relying instead on his own purported knowledge of the area.

Hurlbut led his train north to the head of Salt Creek and intersected Bozeman's 1863 trail from Deer Creek. From there Hurlbut followed Bozeman's trail northwest to their last camping place on Rock Creek, where the members of Hurlbut's train noticed that Bozeman's trail ended. Continuing north on an Indian trail, they passed the west side of Lake De Smet, crossed Little Piney Creek, and stopped at Big Piney Creek, near the site of Fort Phil Kearny. The train waited while Hurlbut explored ahead for a route through the hills. Hurlbut then led the train across Lodge Trail Ridge, down Fetterman Ridge, across the hills and two small creeks, and down the valley of Prairie Dog Creek.

Directly east of Sheridan, while traveling down the east side of Prairie Dog Creek, they turned west, crossed the creek, and went over the narrow divide to Goose Creek, paralleling the north side of present Fifth Street. They crossed Goose Creek just below the junction of

Big and Little Goose Creeks, at about Fourth Street. They ascended the hills west of Goose Creek, went northwest across the highland, and dropped down and crossed Soldier Creek a mile and a half above its mouth. They went three miles up the north side of Soldier Creek, turned northwest, and went across the hills to Wolf Creek. Today, Keystone Road overlays this route. At Wolf Creek, Hurlbut turned and went about five miles up the creek, where the train camped to allow some of the men to prospect in the mountains.

Meanwhile, Bozeman's train was following not far behind. Contrary to popular belief, Bozeman's train was the second train, not the first, to start on the Bozeman Trail in 1864. Bozeman left Richard's Bridge on June 18, only two days after Hurlbut, but he lost more time when he stopped several miles out and waited for others to catch up.¹⁰ Bozeman's train was a few days behind when Hurlbut's train stopped on Wolf Creek, and while they camped, Bozeman's train passed them. This fateful moment dramatically changed the course of the trail's development. After Bozeman passed Hurlbut and took the lead, he established the

⁶ Bozeman's party crossed the Big Horn Basin, went up the Yellowstone Valley, and descended to the Gallatin Valley from a pass they named Bozeman Pass; George W. Irwin II, "Overland to Montana," *Butte Miner*, January 1, 1899.

⁷ The site of Richard's Bridge is north of Evansville, on the eastern edge of Casper. Contemporaries often referred to Richard's Bridge as Reshaw's Bridge, and it was also known as the lower Platte bridge. It was built by John Baptiste Richard Sr. in 1853, who operated it as a toll bridge through 1865. Richard's Bridge was six miles below the upper bridge (1859-1867) at Fort Caspar built by Louis Guinard.

⁸ Little is known about the shadowy figure identified in different sources as Hurlbut, Hurlburt, or Hurlbert. Even his first name is not certain, although the most reliable evidence indicates it was Allen. Hurlbut was a prospector who is credited with discovering gold on Prickly Pear Creek and the fabulously rich "lost mine" in the Bighorn Mountains. The most complete documentation of Hurlbut is in Philip R. Barbour, Research Notes, MC 95, Montana Historical Society, Helena; and Alfred James Mokler, *History of Natrona County, Wyoming, 1888-1922* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1923; reprint, Casper, Wyo.: Mountain States Lithographing, 1989), 90-91.

⁹ The only known diary of this significant train is the lengthy, detailed diary kept by Abram Voorhees, who started as marshal and was elected captain to replace Hurlbut at the Big Horn River; Abram H. Voorhees, Diary, WA MSS-926, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

¹⁰ There are no known diaries from Bozeman's train. John T. Smith's small train caught up with Bozeman on the road and followed close behind him to Montana, and his reminiscence provides most of what is known about Bozeman's train; John T. Smith, "Captain John Bozeman's Trip, 1864," *Bozeman Chronicle*, December 30, 1891.

rest of the route to the Gallatin Valley. And because Bozeman's train arrived in the Gallatin Valley first, his train has been widely celebrated as the first to traverse the Bozeman Trail. Consequently, the trail is now remembered as the Bozeman, not the Hurlbut Trail.

Passing the corralled Hurlbut train, Bozeman's train crossed Wolf Creek and went three miles over a divide to Tongue River. They crossed the Tongue halfway between Ranchester and Dayton, where Bingham post office and stage station was located in the 1880s. They climbed northwest out of the Tongue River Valley, crossed an open plateau, dropped down, and continued northwest to Twin Creek. They crossed Twin Creek just south of the Montana state line and went west through hills to East Pass Creek. They went down East Pass Creek and crossed Pass Creek.

From Pass Creek, they went northwest through a narrow pass to the Little Bighorn River. Continuing northwest, they went over several divides to the Big Horn River, crossing Lodge Grass, Rotten Grass, and Soap Creeks, and descended Soap Creek to the crossing. They crossed the Big Horn at an Indian ford now known as Spotted Rabbit Crossing, at the mouth of Soap Creek, about eight miles below the mouth of the Big Horn Canyon. Bozeman undoubtedly followed an Indian trail north from Wolf Creek to the Big Horn River. And from Pass Creek to the Big Horn, his route was the same one Jim Bridger guided William F. Reynolds southward over in September 1859.¹¹

The Bozeman train crossed the Big Horn River on July 5 and proceeded northwest through badlands to the Yellowstone River. They descended the steep bluffs lining the south side of the river at the mouth of Blue Creek, opposite Billings, Montana. They attempted to travel up the south side of the river, but in a couple miles, bluffs blocked further passage up the river bottom. Bozeman then led the train back over the bluffs in a circuitous westerly course, coming back to the Yellowstone at the mouth of Duck Creek. They went five miles up the Yellowstone bottom and crossed Clarks Fork just above its mouth, turned south, and traveled up the west side. They passed the junction of Rock Creek and continued up its west side to where Bridger's train, coming from the Pryor Mountains, had crossed Rock Creek a few days earlier.

At this point, on Rock Creek a mile below Joliet, the Bozeman train intersected the Bridger Trail. From here to the mountains east of the Gallatin Valley, with a few minor deviations, the Bozeman Trail followed the well-defined Bridger Trail. As a result, west of Rock Creek to the Shields River, the Bozeman Trail is actu-

ally the Bridger Trail. The trail took a westerly course for many miles and came back to the Yellowstone River at the mouth of Bridger Creek. The trail then went up the south side of the Yellowstone and crossed it opposite the mouth of Duck Creek, three miles east of Springdale.

The Bridger and Bozeman routes diverged a few miles west of the Yellowstone ford, at the Shields River. Bozeman crossed the Shields a mile above its mouth, passed the northern edge of Livingston, turned up Pass Creek (today's Billman Creek) to Bozeman Pass, and descended Kelly Creek to the Gallatin Valley.¹² Where Bozeman crossed the Shields, Bridger turned north and took his train up the east side of the river about twelve miles and crossed it at the mouth of Brackett Creek. He went up Brackett Creek, followed down Bridger Creek, and crossed over to also descend through Kelly Canyon. This was the route he had led the Yellowstone expedition over in 1860. The Bozeman and Bridger routes came out the mouth of Kelly Canyon at the site of Fort Ellis at Bozeman.¹³

After escorting his train to Virginia City over a long-used regional road, Bozeman returned to the site of Bozeman and participated in the town meeting on August 9 at which the town was named after him. Because the town was established essentially on the arrival of the first train that traversed the Bozeman Trail, and since all trains entering the Gallatin Valley at this point thereafter scattered widely over existing local roads, Bozeman is the logical terminus of the Bozeman Trail.

The last two trains of 1864, the Townsend and Coffinbury trains, followed the route opened by the Hurlbut and Bozeman trains. However, their experience differed markedly from that of the first two trains. The earlier trains experienced no Indian threat, but when the Townsend train corralled for breakfast on the north bank of the Powder River on July 7, a party of Cheyenne and a few Sioux warriors came to the corral and demanded to be fed. Soon afterward, the Indians raced off and attacked a small party of emigrants who had

¹¹ Reynolds, *Exploration of the Yellowstone*, 56-58.

¹² The present freeway does not go down Kelly Canyon but rather goes down Rocky Canyon, the next canyon to the south, which was too difficult for emigrant wagons. The first territorial road down Rocky Canyon was built in 1876.

¹³ Warren McGee of Livingston, Montana, is the recognized authority on the Bozeman and Bridger Trails in the Yellowstone Valley and Bozeman Pass areas. McGee extensively analyzed maps, diaries, oral histories, and trail remnants to determine the routes of both trails.

gone back looking for a missing man. A running fight ensued, but the emigrants made it back to the train. The train was besieged for six hours, and four emigrants were killed and one wounded in the encounter. The Townsend train went on to Montana with no other Indian problems.¹⁴

The large, three-part Coffinbury train was the last Bozeman Trail train in 1864. An odometer on one of the wagons in the train provided measurements of the route.¹⁵ When the Coffinbury train reached the location of the Townsend Fight, they found the scalp of the man who had been missing from the train, and a short time later, they came upon one of the bodies from the fight that had been dug up by wolves. After that, the Coffinbury train proceeded on to Montana with no disturbances from Indians.

In this defining year, the Bozeman Trail was established with the route Hurlbut and Bozeman developed. The 1864 diaries clearly indicate that the trains went down Salt Creek to the Powder River. However, Salt Creek was often called Dry Creek or Dry Fork at the time, leading to the mistaken view by later historians that Bozeman's route went down the stream now known as Dry Fork Powder River, farther east, which was the route of the trail opened in 1865.

Perhaps the most important revelation of the 1864 diaries is that John Bozeman wasn't solely responsible for the route of the Bozeman Trail, as is popularly believed. In reality, Bozeman pioneered less than a quarter of the route we now call the Bozeman Trail. But Bozeman was lucky. Although he followed the visible trails of others—Indians, traders, explorers, Allen Hurlbut, and, above all, Jim Bridger—because of fortuitous historical circumstances, the trail now bears his name.

Two widely divergent events in early 1865 significantly impacted the route of the Bozeman Trail. At the beginning of the year, the first Montana territorial legislature passed thirty-three acts granting charters for wagon roads, bridges, and ferries. Two of these charters directly concerned the Bozeman Trail. The two charter companies immediately merged, forming the Bozeman to Fort Laramie Road Company. On April 15 the company announced ambitious plans for developing the Bozeman Trail in a front-page article in the *Virginia City Montana Post*, proclaiming it to be "the best road to Montana." Ferry boats were built for the major river crossings, and John Bozeman and Jim Bridger were recruited to guide emigrants from the North Platte River over the trail.

The road company's promising plans were brought to a sudden halt, when the federal government closed the Bozeman Trail to emigrant traffic and began planning a massive punitive expedition against the Northern Plains tribes in the Powder River Basin. Intended to settle the threat of Indian danger on the trail, the decision to launch the campaign marked a critical turning point in the trail's history. If carried through, the impact of a private company organizing the road would have undoubtedly led to major changes in the route, but as it was, the military campaign accomplished it. That summer General Patrick E. Connor led a column of the Powder River Indian Expedition up the Bozeman Trail, establishing a new route from the North Platte River to a few miles south of Clear Creek.¹⁶ This new route was taken by all subsequent travelers and is the route now known as the Bozeman Trail for this segment.

The most important consequence of the expedition for the route of the Bozeman Trail was that Jim Bridger was Connor's chief guide. Connor's command marched from Fort Laramie at the end of July, forded the North Platte River at La Bonte Crossing (a few miles west of the 1866 crossing at Bridger's Ferry), and traveled up the north side on the road now known as Child's Cut-off. About three miles opposite and west of the site of Fort Fetterman (established 1867), at the mouth of Sage Creek, Connor turned north and went up Sage Creek Valley. Writings by expedition members reveal that

¹⁴ The known Townsend train diaries are T. J. Brundage, "Diary, 1864," in Elsa Spear, ed., *The Books and Photos of Elsa Spear* (Sheridan: Ft. Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association, 1987), 17-18; and Benjamin Williams Ryan, "The Bozeman Trail to Virginia City in 1864," *Annals of Wyoming* 19 (July 1947): 77-104. In addition to the Townsend train diaries and reminiscences, an informative source on the Townsend Fight is David B. Weaver, "Captain Townsend's Battle on the Powder River," *Contributions to the Montana Historical Society* 8 (1917): 283-93. A manuscript map by Weaver locates the site of the fight opposite the mouth of the South Fork Powder River; David B. Weaver, Papers, SC 969, Montana Historical Society, Helena.

¹⁵ John and Margaret Tomlinson kept an odometer log and journals; John J. Tomlinson and Margaret H. Tomlinson, *Diaries, 1864*, BL 64, Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City. John Hackney and Richard Owens kept diaries and also recorded the Tomlinsons' odometer readings; John S. Hackney, *Diary*, SC 778, Montana Historical Society, Helena; and Richard Owens, *Diary* SC 613, Montana Historical Society, Helena.

¹⁶ This new route of the trail is described in the diary of Captain B. F. Rockafellow and the accounts of Captain Henry E. Palmer and Finn Burnett, published in LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, eds., *The Powder River Campaigns and Sawyers Expedition* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1961). Another important source is Edwin R. Nash, *Diary*, 1865, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Connor struck across country and made a new trail. This new route is entirely logical, since Bridger was thoroughly familiar with this region. Bridger's route was shorter, not as sandy, and less alkaline than the emigrant route down Salt Creek, and it was much better suited for a wagon road.

Bridger guided Connor's command up Sage Creek, crossed it, and continued northwest to Brown Springs Creek, named for Lieutenant John Brown of the 11th Ohio Cavalry who was killed by Indians the previous summer.¹⁷ Continuing north, the command crossed the Dry Fork Cheyenne River and several other forks of the Cheyenne River, now known as Bear Creek, Stinking Water Creek, and Sand Creek. These crossings became popular camping spots in subsequent trail years. One of them, on a fork of Stinking Water Creek, was known as Humfreville's Camp, named for one of Connor's officers, Captain J. Lee Humfreville. From Sand Creek, the new route crossed a high divide to Antelope Creek (then called Wind River) and in a short distance crossed a smaller stream now called Wind Creek. For the next twenty miles, the route went over hills to Dry Fork Powder River and followed down its bed to the Powder River. The command crossed the Powder at an Indian ford about twelve miles below Bozeman's ford.

Connor established a post on a bluff on the west side of the Powder River, about a half mile above their camp. First named Camp Connor, the name was soon changed to Fort Connor, and in November to Fort Reno. On the first day in camp, a detachment was sent to explore upstream. Captain Henry Palmer reported that they went as far as "the crossing of the old traders' road from the Platte Bridge to the Big Horn Mountains, and past the same, known as the Bozeman Trail, made in 1864 by J. M. Bozeman of Montana."¹⁸ Bridger and Connor's command left the new post on August 22 and traveled northwest on a well-worn Indian trail. The next day Palmer noted, "fourteen miles from Crazy Woman's Fork we struck the Bozeman Wagon Trail made in 1864."¹⁹ From the intersection with Bozeman's route, seven miles south of Buffalo, they began following the emigrant route of the preceeding two years.

Although the Bozeman Trail had been closed to emigrants, one large civilian train traversed it in 1865. At the same time Connor campaigned in the Powder River Basin, James A. Sawyers of Sioux City, Iowa, led a government wagon-road expedition, accompanied by military escorts, over much of the Bozeman Trail.²⁰ The Sawyers expedition was funded to survey the Niobrara to Virginia City Wagon Road. The train left

the Missouri River at Niobrara, traveled up the Niobrara River, and went directly west to the Powder River. Sawyers struck Connor's trail on the Dry Fork Powder River, about thirteen miles east of the Powder, and followed it to the newly established post. The train arrived at Camp Connor on August 24 and left two days later, on Connor's trail.

Meanwhile, four days ahead of Sawyers, Connor was traveling down Prairie Dog Creek on the emigrant route of the Bozeman Trail and passed where the emigrant route branched off to the west. He continued down Prairie Dog to the Tongue River, but when Sawyers, following his trail, came to the fork in the road, he turned west onto the emigrant road and crossed the divide to Goose Creek. Sawyers did not mention turning off Connor's trail in his official report, but expedition topographer Lewis H. Smith recorded in his diary that they "left Connors track and struck off to Bozmans trail."²¹ Teamster C. M. Lee explained how they knew to turn at the fork in his incredibly detailed diary: "during the afternoon there was a dispatch found stuck up on an old Elk horn along side of the road from Col. Bridger to Sawyers directing the latter to take the left hand or old Boseman trail ahead."²²

The Sawyers train crossed Goose Creek at Sheridan and went northwest to the Tongue River. While they were crossing the river, they were attacked by Arapaho Indians. They corralled on the north bank of the Tongue for several days, waiting for reinforcements from Connor's command downstream. An escort eventually arrived, and the Sawyers train continued on the Bozeman Trail to the Gallatin Valley. Sawyers disbanded the expedition in Virginia City and returned east. Although the Sawyers expedition accomplished little or no road building, it ultimately led to an important change in the route of the Bozeman Trail. When Sawyers reached Rock Creek, after traversing

¹⁷ An account of the incident is in the letters of Corporal Hervey Johnson; William E. Unrau, ed., *Tending the Talking Wire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 154-55, 335.

¹⁸ Hafen and Hafen, *Powder River Campaigns*, 116-17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁰ Three diaries of the Sawyers expedition provide odometer measurements and detailed route information; James A. Sawyers, *Official Report* (39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, H. Ex. Doc. 58, Serial 1256), reprinted in Hafen and Hafen, *Powder River Campaigns*, 224-85; C. M. Lee, *Diary*, 1865, SC 261, K. Ross Toole Archives, Mansfield Library, University of Montana, Missoula; and Lewis H. Smith, *Diary*, 1865, SC 1716, Montana Historical Society, Helena.

²¹ Smith, *Diary*, August 31, 1865.

²² Lee, *Diary*, August 30, 1865.

Bozeman's difficult, winding route via the Yellowstone River, he recorded in his journal that a cutoff could be made from the Big Horn River directly west to Clarks Fork that would save more than twenty miles.²³

At the end of the 1865 season, there was a new Bozeman Trail for the segment from the North Platte to Clear Creek. The new segment was distinct and widely separated from the earlier emigrant road. During the next three years, all emigrant and military travelers used this new route, and the earlier route was forgotten. It was a momentous year for the Bozeman Trail. Connor achieved a new route and established the first fort on the trail. But instead of making the trail safer for future travelers, his expensive and disastrous campaign only guaranteed increased Indian-white conflict over the trail. And Sawyers, following in Connor's wake, suggested a major improvement in the trail west of the Big Horn River.

Emigrant travel on the Bozeman Trail commenced again in summer 1866, when migration that had been curtailed by government orders and national preoccupation with the Civil War was unleashed. During this first postwar migration, traffic on all western overland trails was immense. The pivotal Bozeman Trail event was the mid-summer military occupation of the trail. In June Colonel Henry B. Carrington and the 18th Infantry marched north from Fort Laramie with orders to establish three forts along the trail for the protection of emigrants. Ultimately, instead of providing protection, permanent military presence escalated the Indian-white conflict to all-out warfare.

A dozen known diaries written by 1866 travelers provide a graphic picture of the turbulent travel season. The character of the Bozeman Trail changed radically in this year. A high proportion of the travelers were freighters, in what has been called the "second rush" to exploit the miners in the mining camps. Also, in contrast to the few large trains of 1864, many smaller trains traversed the trail this year. Early travelers experience no Indian problems, but after Fort Phil Kearny was established, all trains were required to combine into huge trains for safety. Approximately 2,000 people and 1,200 wagons traveled over the Bozeman Trail in this decisive year.

Until late July, Bozeman Trail travelers followed the 1865 route of the army and Sawyers to the Big Horn River and then Bozeman's route by way of the Yellowstone to the intersection with the Bridger Trail on Rock Creek. For early travelers, the Big Horn ford

near the mouth of Soap Creek was especially difficult and dangerous. In July some men from Bozeman set up a private ferry close to the canyon. The Bozeman men did not stay long, and soon emigrants were running the ferry. Fort C. F. Smith was established in August near the ferry, and thereafter all of the emigrants crossed there, and the earlier ford was discontinued.

In the middle of the 1866 season, just ahead of some three hundred wagons lined up at the Big Horn ferry, James A. Sawyers and his second wagon-road expedition struck directly west of the ferry on July 29 and blazed the cutoff he proposed the previous year. His new route intersected the Bridger Trail on the west side of Clarks Fork, then followed it six miles to the Rock Creek crossing, where Bozeman's route coming up Rock Creek joined it on the west bank. The rest of the emigrants that season, including those guided by Jim Bridger under Carrington's orders, followed him and took this new route.

The establishment of Fort Phil Kearny in July and Fort C. F. Smith in August began the transition of the Bozeman Trail from an emigrant to a military road. The process was effectively completed by the end of the 1866 travel season. Jim Bridger's reconnaissance in late summer, and Ambrose Bierce's survey notes and map made during Colonel William B. Hazen's inspection tour in the fall, are essential sources for determining the route of the Bozeman Trail from the North Platte River to the Big Horn River as it existed at the close of the year.²⁴

Sometime in spring 1867, the army opened a new route between Forts Phil Kearny and C. F. Smith. References to the new road first appear in military reports and on maps in summer 1867. This military road, then known as the cutoff, left the emigrant road at the base of Fetterman Ridge. The cutoff paralleled the emigrant route, keeping closer to the mountains, and rejoined it about two miles south of the Montana state line. The cutoff followed the route that Jim Bridger guided Reynolds over in September 1859 on his way south from the Tongue River. Evidence indicates that this military cutoff was opened by Bridger himself in spring 1867 when he returned to Fort Phil Kearny from

²³ Sawyers, *Official Report*, September 25, 1865.

²⁴ Bridger's survey is in Grace R. Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922), 2: 119-21. Bierce's manuscript survey is in Ambrose G. Bierce, "Surveyor's Field Book," Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

his winter stay at Fort C. F. Smith.²⁵ Once again, Jim Bridger was singularly responsible for a major segment of the Bozeman Trail.

The first mention of the military cutoff was made by Lieutenant Colonel Luther P. Bradley in his report to Mountain District headquarters on his arrival at Fort C. F. Smith with his 27th Infantry command. Bradley wrote that the road from Fort Phil Kearny to the Tongue River, "known as the cut-off," was "a bad road nearly all the way and I would advise against any loaded train being sent over it again, as from all the information I can get, it is much worse than the old road [and] by my estimate, eight (8) miles longer."²⁶ Bradley enclosed a map of the 27th Infantry route which depicts the relative positions of the old and new routes.

According to Bradley's map, the new road was west of and closer to the mountains than the old road. It began at the old road at the base of Fetterman Ridge, went northwest on the approximate route of Sheridan County 28, and crossed Little Goose Creek at Big Horn. From the Little Goose crossing, it continued northwest up Jackson Creek, went through a gap in the Beaver Creek Hills, crossed Beaver Creek, and crossed Big Goose Creek at Beckton. It continued across hills and creeks to the Tongue River, crossing it at Dayton, two and a half miles west of the emigrant crossing. From there it went northwest over more hills and joined the emigrant route near Parkman, about two miles south of the Montana state line. The cutoff is the route Vie Willits Garber described as the Bozeman Trail, which became the traditionally accepted route of the trail. The State of Wyoming officially marked it as the Bozeman Trail with a series of granite monuments in 1913.

Bridger probably never intended the cutoff to replace the earlier route. Rather, it offered a viable alternate route between the posts. During the remaining two years of military occupation, the cutoff was used by more mobile detachments, while the emigrant route down Prairie Dog Creek was preferred for heavily weighted freight wagons. One of the last conflicts on the trail occurred on the emigrant route and involved a supply train. In November 1867, Lieutenant E. R. P. Shurly commanded an escort accompanying a supply train on its way to Fort C. F. Smith. The train was on the old route, and while going down the east side of Prairie Dog Creek, a sudden Indian attack forced the train to corral on the bank of the creek a few miles southeast of Sheridan.²⁷ The train was besieged for several hours before a cavalry detachment arrived. The fight is best remembered by whites for Shurly's contention that the Indians were trying to capture their howitzer, and by

the Indians because they captured a wagon loaded with blankets.

One more, very minor change in the route of the Bozeman Trail occurred after Fort Fetterman was established in July 1867 on the south side of the North Platte River, on a bluff east of La Prele Creek. Thereafter, most traffic approached the Bozeman Trail on the south-side overland trail and forded the North Platte River just north of the fort. From the ford, a new route of the Bozeman Trail went northwest and in a few miles connected with the earlier route coming up Sage Creek.

The emigrant and military routes of the Bozeman Trail resulted from the complex interaction of particular people, events, and geography during the brief Bozeman Trail era, 1863-1868. The four men responsible for developing the various segments of the trail were Jim Bridger, John Bozeman, James Sawyers, and Allen Hurlbut. In terms of the final route of the trail, the one we now call the Bozeman Trail, Bridger was responsible for a greater number of trail miles than the other three combined. While John Bozeman doggedly pursued his vision of opening a shortcut to the Montana goldfields, without Jim Bridger, there would be no Bozeman Trail.

²⁵ Documentation that Bridger opened the military cutoff is provided by Captain William S. Stanton, topographer with General George Crook in summer 1876. In his diary, Stanton referred to the military cutoff as "Bridger's cut-off branch of the Fort C. F. Smith road" on June 20 and 21, 1876; Lloyd McFarling, ed., *Exploring the Northern Plains, 1804-1876* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1955), 368.

²⁶ Luther P. Bradley to A.A.A.G., Mountain District, July 27, 1867; #B73 1867; Letters Received, 1867-1869; Department of the Platte, vol. 1; U. S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920, Record Group 393; National Archives, Washington, DC.

²⁷ The location of the Shurly Fight on the emigrant route is determined from George Templeton, Diary, November 7 and 8, 1867, and April 4, 1868, Graff 4099, Newberry Library, Chicago; and Shurly to Templeton, November 10, 1867, reprinted in Spear, *Books and Photos*, 40-41.

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THE BRIDGER TRAIL

An Alternative Route to the Gold Fields of Montana Territory in 1864¹

by
James A. Lowe

Bridger's [Trail], is much more popular, probably from the fact that Bridger is an old and well known mountaineer, having spent his whole life among the mountains and the Indians and having the reputation of being a reliable man. He holds a commission of Major in the U. S. army and has been much in the employ of the Govt.

--- **Franklin Kirkaldie, 1864**

The Letters of Franklin Luther Kirkaldie

Significant deposits of gold and silver discovered in Montana and Idaho in the early 1860s fostered a peregrination of transient prospectors, miners, and adventurers--disappointed in their luck in the regions of California, Nevada, and Colorado--to the nascent gold mining communities of Bannack and Virginia City, Montana, that sprang up as a result of the placers found at Alder Gulch in 1863.² Farmers in the East and Midwest, disillusioned with their marginal properties, residents of small towns, and men avoiding the Civil War, joined the migration as well. A faster and shorter route was needed to access the new Territory of Montana and the Bridger Trail provided a viable alternative to the Bozeman and Oregon Trail routes to Virginia City. Jim Bridger's route west of the Bighorn Mountains through the Big Horn Basin provided safer passage than the Bozeman Trail for emigrant trains traveling to Montana during the turbulent decade of Plains Indian unrest; at the same time, it eliminated hundreds of miles and many days of travel along the least dangerous but circuitous route via the Oregon Trail and Lander Cut-off, or longer routes by way of Fort Bridger or Salt

Lake City, before heading north to Fort Hall and Virginia City on the Montana Trail.

United States territorial advancement, gold discoveries, and initial Euro-American settlement in the West increasingly encroached on aboriginal Plains Indian societies; therefore, Bridger's route was no accident. The primary reason he blazed his trail was to avoid the hostilities of the Lakota Sioux and their allies, the

¹ This article is but a small portion of a book under contract with the Arthur H. Clark Company to be published in Spring 1999. Genesis of this topic was the direct result of required mitigation for the construction of the Express Pipeline in Wyoming. The pipeline crossed two extant segments of the Bridger Trail in Hot Springs and Fremont Counties, Wyoming (Sites 48HO207 and 48FR717, respectively). TRC Mariah Associates, Laramie, contracted to mitigate cultural resources along the pipeline corridor, and Express Pipeline Inc., of Calgary, Alberta, funded the research and writing of this study. Field reconnaissance verified extant physical evidence on the ground, determined the feasibility of negotiating the topography, and located emigrant names incised on sandstone rock formations along the trail in the central and northern portions of Wyoming. These names not only substantiate the route in the two locations, but the latter, especially, helps to identify the emigrant crossing of the Shoshone River, a location shown approximately twelve miles to the west on the USGS quadrangles.

² James Stuart, "The Yellowstone Expedition of 1863." *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana* 1 (1876), 152. Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier: Granville Stuart--Gold-Miner, Trader, Merchant, Rancher, and Politician*. Edited by Paul C. Phillips. 2 vols. Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1925, vol. 2, 247, 262, 265. Also see "Discovery and Settlement of Alder Creek," *Montana Post*, January 21, 1865.

Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho, who cherished and protected the rich hunting grounds of the Powder River Basin assigned to them as part of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. Beginning in 1866, the Sioux vehemently carried out "Red Cloud's War," a campaign to oust the U. S. Army, freighters, and emigrant trains from the Powder River country; their efforts, as promulgated by the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, resulted in the closure of the Bozeman Trail and abandonment of the forts constructed in vain to protect it. These issues were at the core of the conflict and germane to any peaceful and practical resolution. Jim Bridger, realizing the sensitivity of these issues, chose an emigrant trail route west of the Big Horn Mountains that would not trespass through the Powder River country.³

Bridger's trail departed the main Oregon Trail a few miles west of Red Buttes, located on the North Platte River just west of Fort Caspar. Heading in a north-westerly direction, the trail skirted the southern end of the Big Horn Mountains to Badwater Creek, then avoided the impassable Wind River Canyon by heading north up Bridger Creek and over the Bridger Mountains. At the summit of the divide, it crossed over to the eastern or south fork of Kirby Creek and descended it to the Big Horn River. In the past, two noted historians maintained that the trail passed through the canyon.⁴ The trail crossed the Big Horn and continued along the west side of the river, usually within a mile or less until opposite the mouth of Nowood Creek; at this point, it left the Big Horn and proceeded northwest to the Greybull River. After crossing the Greybull, the trail continued west on the north side of the river to the vicinity of the big bend, where it proceeded north until it reached the Shoshone River, then downstream to a point near the mouth of Sage Creek.

The trail crossed the Shoshone and continued northwest following Sage Creek, then continued north until it reached Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River near Bridger, Montana. The Bridger and Bozeman Trails converged along Rock Creek, twenty miles farther down the Clarks Fork in Montana. From this point, the two routes continued west (with minor variations) as the Bridger Trail south of the Yellowstone River to the Shields River crossing east of Livingston, Montana. On the east side of the Shields River, the respective routes of the Bridger and Bozeman Trails diverged as each guide chose a different route over the mountains into the Gallatin Valley. Bridger's trail continued west, then south up the valley of the Madison River to the bustling gold mining town of Virginia City.

At least ten individual wagon trains departed along the Bridger Trail between May and September 1864. A cumulative count from Bridger Trail diaries shows that over 600, possibly close to 700 wagons, thousands of head of stock (horses, mules, oxen, steers, and milk cows), and up to 2,500 men, women, and children traveled the Bridger Trail. Combined, the original General Land Office plat maps, 1864 emigrant diaries, and reminiscences are invaluable for verifying the trail route.

By 1864 Bridger had forty years experience in the Rocky Mountain West as a fur trapper, trader, guide, and partner in the famous Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He had become a wilderness savant, accumulating an astounding mental map of western North America. Subsequently, he played an integral role in the initial geographical discoveries in the West, which, in turn, helped foster early Euro-American emigration and settlement. He quit the moribund fur trade in 1842, and with partner Louis Vasquez, established a trading post in future Wyoming along Blacks Fork of the Green River in 1843.⁵

³ References to diminished bison herds and other game resources in general, due to emigrant roads through Indian lands and the Powder River country in particular, are ubiquitous in the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. They were considered the principal factors preventing peaceful coexistence between emigrants and Native Americans on the northern plains and intermountain regions during the late 1850s and throughout the 1860s. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* for 1860, p. 83; 1861, pp. 638-39, 642; 1862, pp. 185-86, 320-21, 324, 339-40; 1863, pp. 130-31, 140-41, 284-85, 375; 1864, pp. 171, 315-16, 417, 442; 1865, pp. 382, 616-17, 723; 1866, pp. 171-72; 1867, pp. 3-4, 186-87.

⁴ Merrill G. Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier* (Helena: State Publishing Co., 1942), 132; W. Turrentine Jackson, *Wagon Roads West: A Study of Federal Road Surveys and Construction in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1846-1869* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 284. Burlingame and Jackson assumed the trail followed the modern railroad and highway route through Wind River Canyon, which were not completed until 1914 and 1923-1924, respectively. Prior to that, the canyon was impassable to horse, wagon, and automobile traffic, as evidenced by Maynadier's predicament when he reached the mouth of the canyon. Bridger's route and Bird's Eye Pass were two of the routes used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to pass over the Bridger Mountains. General Land Office survey plat maps were used to corroborate primary and secondary source materials.

⁵ Jim Bridger traveled far and wide throughout the Rocky Mountain region during his tenure with the various fur companies. He played a far more important role in exploration of the Far West than he has been given credit for in the literature, and that his "tall tales," whether embellished upon or not, were based on empirical knowledge accumulated over more than forty years (1823-68) in the Rocky Mountains and on the frontier.

After several years of relative tranquility as a successful trading entrepreneur, Bridger entered a period of public service as guide nonpareil for a series of exploratory expeditions sponsored by the federal government to determine future transportation routes in the Rocky Mountains and Far West, and for U. S. Army field expeditions during the Indian wars of the 1860s. In succession, Bridger guided Captain Howard Stansbury's expedition of 1849-50, designed to acquire geographical and geological data about the West that would facilitate a future route for a transcontinental railroad and telegraph and identify the location of coal deposits; Lieutenant G. K. Warren's 1856 expedition to reconnoiter the regions surrounding the Black Hills and the Yellowstone River; Captain William Reynolds' 1859-60 Yellowstone Expedition; the 1861 exploratory expedition by Captain E.L. Berthoud to discover a stage route over the central Rockies; and Colonel William Collins' trek along the Overland and Oregon Trails in 1862. In 1865 he guided General Patrick Connor's Powder River Campaign; accompanied General Grenville Dodge to Fort Laramie in 1867 to ascertain the best location for the rail line across the Black Hills (Laramie Range) to the Laramie Plains, the route he had shown Stansbury fifteen years before; and he performed numerous exploratory and guide duties during Red Cloud's War, 1866-68. Bridger held the rank of Major and chief guide assigned to Fort Laramie throughout the 1860s until his retirement late in 1868.⁶

Captain Reynolds of the U. S. Army Topographical Corps was ordered to locate four possible wagon routes through northern Wyoming and southern Montana. Accompanied by Lieutenant Henry Maynadier, the expedition was also instructed to separate and perform individual reconnaissance: one group exploring the upper reaches of the Big Horn River, while the other explored the upper Yellowstone drainage. On the recommendation of the Choteau Fur Company, long the headquarters for mountaineers, Reynolds hired the "best guide," civilian Jim Bridger, to lead the expedition.⁷ The following spring, after spending the winter at Deer Creek, Reynolds chose to explore the Yellowstone country. On May 23, 1860, he informed Maynadier of his plans for reconnaissance.

I spent the evening with Lieutenant Maynadier, making arrangements for our future explorations.... Lieutenant Maynadier is to descend the Big Horn to the point at which we left in September, and thence proceed westward along the base of the mountains, cross-

ing the Yellowstone and reaching Three Forks... we shall meet at the Three Forks on the last day of June.⁸

Maynadier's exploration along the Big Horn River provided the basis for future historians to claim that he was responsible for locating the trail route utilized by Bridger in 1864; however, Maynadier's route differed considerably from the trail blazed by Bridger four years later.⁹ Although Maynadier's party was ordered to map a wagon road through the Big Horn Basin and was probably the first to take wheeled vehicles into the basin, this reconnaissance probably did not provide Bridger with any information concerning a route that he did not already know.¹⁰ In his report, Reynolds was nega-

⁶ Howard Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah. Including a Reconnaissance of a New Route Through the Rocky Mountains*. Spec. sess., March 1851. Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 3. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1852), 76, 80; Brigham D. Madsen, *Exploring the Great Salt Lake: The Stansbury Expedition of 1849-50* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 130; William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 223-24. G. K. Warren, *Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska and Dakota in the Years 1855-1856-1857*. 1875 Reprint. (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 10-11, 15-16. William F. Reynolds, *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone and the Country Drained by that River*. 40th Cong., 2d sess., 1868. Sen. Exec. Doc. No. 77 Serial 1317. (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1868), 4-5.

⁷ Reynolds, *Exploration of the Yellowstone*, 4, 18.

⁸ Reynolds, *Exploration of the Yellowstone*, 82.

⁹ Jackson, *Wagon Roads West*, 267; Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, 420. Jackson and Goetzmann focused on the fact that Maynadier traversed the Big Horn Basin as he followed the Big Horn River downstream. No comparison or research of the particular details concerning the trail route was attempted, due to their individual choice of topics and larger focus of federal road construction and exploration throughout the West.

¹⁰ Charles Lindsay, *The Big Horn Basin*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1932), 59-60. Among other difficulties, Maynadier wandered for three days in the Copper Mountain region trying to find his way around the Wind River Canyon to the Big Horn River, and he lost a team of mules and valuable equipment when searching for a crossing of the Shoshone River. Maynadier dispatched three men to reconnoiter a route along the Big Horn River while he investigated the northern end of the canyon. The men returned and informed Maynadier "that no road could be found along the river." The following day involved "a toilsome days march," and the next day, it became "evident that . . . no road even for pack-animals could be found entirely in the river valley. For three days we had been laboring in the broken region, making very little progress and using up animals and men." Abandoning all but one wagon and the light ambulances for transporting the instruments, the remaining equipage was transferred to the mules for transport. Maynadier crossed the Shoshone, but paid a price. Four mules, an ambulance, equipment, and instruments were lost in the swift current. Reynolds, *Exploration of the Yellowstone*, 133-34, 136-37.

tive in his response to any possible route through the Big Horn Basin. "This part of the country . . . is repelling in all its characteristics, and can only be traversed with the greatest difficulty. . . . The valley of the Big Horn . . . is totally surrounded on all sides by mountain ridges, and presents but few agricultural advantages. . . . This region is totally unfit for either rail or wagon roads."¹¹ This and other descriptions like it are found in Reynolds' report and seem to have prejudiced the military in favor of the route on the eastern side of the Big Horns. It may well have been one of the reasons the Bridger Trail was abandoned in favor of the Bozeman Trail during the years immediately following 1864.¹²

Jim Bridger took the first train of miners and emigrants north on the Bridger Trail in spring 1864, four weeks ahead of the first train on the Bozeman Trail. Colonel Collins released Bridger, temporarily, from his commission as post scout at Fort Laramie on April 30. An emigrant train left Denver about May 1 and headed north to Fort Laramie, bound for the Montana gold fields. Expecting a surge of emigration to Montana, Collins telegraphed his superiors on April 26 and expressed his concerns for the proposed Bozeman Trail route through the Powder River Basin.

Immigration is coming rapidly; trouble with the Indians may be expected, and I need power or instructions. . . . A large party is coming from Denver to go a new route from the Platte to the mines, crossing the Big Horn and Yellowstone. . . . Other trains are coming with same object. The route will be at least 200 miles shorter, through a country that ought to be opened, but a strong military party will be necessary. . . . I have devoted the last two years to understanding this country. . . . In this mountain service it is better to lead than follow immigration. Could I have my way, it should be sifted, controlled, and guided on designated routes; not permitted to run wild and make trouble.¹³

Bridger piloted this train as the first from his new cutoff west of Red Buttes on May 20.¹⁴ His party included Reverend Learner B. Stater, whose written account of this trip is the only one known to exist. The train consisted of sixty-two wagons and approximately three hundred men, "organized under the guidance of Major Bridger . . . and traveled in military order."¹⁵ O'Dillon B. Whitford, physician and surgeon, probably traveled north from Denver with Stater's initial train to Fort Laramie, then with Bridger in the vanguard. Whitford maintains that he traveled "with forty women and fifteen hundred men. . . ."¹⁶ John Jacobs led the second train over the Bridger Trail, de-

parting the cutoff on May 30. He had been with John Bozeman on their first exploration of the Bozeman Trail route early in 1863. Together with guide Rafael Gallegos, they lead the first train of emigrants east of the Big Horn Mountains later that same year until a

¹¹ Reynolds, *Exploration of the Yellowstone*, 9, 13.

¹² In fact, not only was Reynolds' opinion of the western Powder River Basin, east of the Big Horn Mountains, favorable to the construction of a road, he added this observation in his 1868 report: "At the eastern base of the Big Horn mountains there is a belt of country some 20 miles in width that is peculiarly suitable for a wagon road, and which I doubt not will become the great line of travel into the valley of the Three Forks." This statement is followed by a footnote. "Note for 1867.- The recent developments of this country have opened this route by the foot of the Big Horn range, and forts [Reno, Phil Kearny, and C. F. Smith] are now being established along the entire line." *Ibid.*, 13. In 1867, Gen. William T. Sherman had another reason to keep the Bozeman Trail open—to divert Sioux attention away from the construction of the transcontinental railroad. See Robert G. Athearn, *William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 101-02.

¹³ Lt. Col. William Collins to Brig. Gen. Robert B. Mitchell, Fort Laramie, April 25, 1864. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. House Misc. Doc., 52nd Cong., 1st sess., vol. 34, part 3, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1892), 304-05. Collins was fully aware of the ramifications of trespassing through Lakota Sioux territory set aside for them in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, and previous problems associated with unbridled emigration related to gold rushes across the West. Red Cloud's War was the result.

¹⁴ Granville Stuart was in Montana in 1864. He remembered that "Jim Bridger and John Jacobs made a road from the Red Buttes on North Platte to Virginia City via Wind river, Stinking river, Pryors fork, Clarks fork and the Yellowstone river and a large number of wagons came by that route." G. Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier*, vol. 2, p. 15.

¹⁵ E. J. Stanley, *Life of Reverend L. B. Stater: A Story of Life on the Old Frontier*. (Nashville, Dallas, and Richmond: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1916), 175.

¹⁶ O'Dillon B. Whitford, May 18, 1890, letter to W. A. Clark, Society of Montana Pioneers. O'Dillon B. Whitford, Letters and Application for membership to the Society of Montana Pioneers. Montana Historical Society, Helena. Society of Montana Pioneers Records. MC 68. Also see James J. Sanders, ed., *Society of Montana Pioneers: Constitution, Members, and Officers, with Portrait and Maps*. Volume 1, Register. (Akron, Ohio: The Werner Co., 1899), 241; hereafter referred to as the pioneer register. Of the emigrants listed in the register who took the Bridger Trail, Whitford's appears to be the only entry besides Stater to have departed from Denver. The July 12, date of arrival provides the additional evidence to confirm this. Whitford's statement that he traveled with 1,500 men and 40 women is by far the largest number put forth by any existing correspondence from a trail member. The figure undoubtedly refers to the total number of wagons and emigrants that comprised the first three trains under Bridger, Jacobs, and Allensworth. As a physician and surgeon, Whitford was well educated, lending credence to his estimate of the number of emigrants who travelled with him.

large party of Cheyenne and Sioux forced them to return to the main Oregon Trail route. Howard Stanfield, a young traveler from Indiana, accompanied Jacobs' train. He and other members of the train referred to Bridger's route as the "Yellowstone Cutoff."¹⁷

The third train of over one hundred wagons took the Bridger Cutoff on June 4, under the leadership of Captain Allensworth. Cornelius Hedges, one of the members of the train, provides the principal source of information regarding the day-to-day events experienced by this party of travelers along the Bridger Trail. Hedges was very well-educated for a trail pioneer. He had earned a degree from Yale, studied law at Harvard, then became both a lawyer and newspaper publisher in his home state of Iowa.¹⁸ He was destined to become a prominent figure during Montana's territorial period, and later, in early statehood.

Another train of over one hundred wagons assembled for departure on the Bridger Trail by June 10, under the leadership of Joseph Knight. Knight had been on the North Platte River since at least 1854, when he was employed to work on Richard's bridge, and he remained in the region as a trader.¹⁹ Robert Vaughn traveled with this train all the way to Virginia City. He recalled in his 1898 reminiscence that while at Fort Laramie his party met John Bozeman on or about June 5, who "sought to organize a train to take the cut-off route east of the Big Horn mountains. There was also a man by the name of McKnight, who was a trader at this place. He had two wagons loaded with goods for Alder Gulch . . . and he was getting up a train to go west of the Big Horn mountains and through the Wind River country." Vaughn remembered that the train consisted of "four hundred and fifty men and over one hundred wagons." Before starting north on the trail, all members of the party signed an agreement "to stand by and defend each other at all hazards. . . ."²⁰

William Alderson and his brother John emigrated from Illinois and were members of one of the smaller trains that took the Bridger Cutoff on June 15. The train consisted of 46 wagons--12 horse-drawn wagons, 16 ox-drawn wagons, and 18 mule-drawn wagons.²¹ The members of the train chose Joe Todd as the captain. One week later, two midwestern school teachers were members of a train consisting of approximately one hundred wagons that departed the Bridger Cutoff on June 22. Charles Baker and William Atchison emigrated from two small communities in northern Illinois and may have known each other prior to the formation of their train near the cutoff. Both men kept detailed diaries describing their trip along the trail to Virginia City. Ethel Maynard and Reverend Jonathon



Jim Bridger

Blanchard, prominent Presbyterian and Congregationalist minister and president of Wheaton College in Illinois, were also members of this train. Trader Bob McMinn, known as Rocky Mountain Bob to the diarists, was their guide.²²

¹⁷ Jack J. Detzler, ed., *Diary of Howard Stillwell Stanfield: Overland Trip from Indiana to California, 1864 via Virginia City, Montana Territory*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 56-57.

¹⁸ Wyllys A. Hedges, "Cornelius Hedges." *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana* 7 (1910):181-196, pp. 181-83; Dorothy M. Johnson, *The Bloody Bozeman: The Perilous Trail to Montana's Gold*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 112-13.

¹⁹ Robert A. Murray, "Trading Posts, Forts and Bridges of the Casper Area: Unraveling the Tangle on the Upper Platte," *Annals of Wyoming* 47, (1975), 12; Charles H. Ramsdell, *An Epic of the Middle West: Excerpts from the Personal Diary of the Late William Emory Atchison in 1864*. (Minneapolis: Charles H. Ramsdell and J. E. Haynes, 1933), 8. Also see John S. Gray, "Blazing the Bridger and Bozeman Trails," *Annals of Wyoming* 49 (1977), 44.

²⁰ Robert Vaughn, *Then and Now; Or, Thirty-Six Years in the Rockies*. (Minneapolis: Tribune Printing Co., 1900), 24-25.

²¹ Gray, *Bridger and Bozeman Trails*, 44.

²² Charles W. Baker, "The Diary of Charles W. Baker, April 21, 1864--September 1867. Trip via Covered Wagon & Mules to Virginia City, Montana, from Polo, Illinois." *Montana Historical Society*, Helena. Typescript of original diary. SC 1275, Folder 1/1; Ramsdell, *Atchison Diary*; Robert H. Keller Jr., "The 1864 Overland Trail: Five Letters from Jonathan Blanchard." *Nebraska History* 63 (1982):71-86; Ethel Albert Maynard Reminiscence. *Montana Historical Society*, Helena. SC 2008, Folders 1 and 2.

Bridger Trail Trains in 1864: Order of Departure, Prominent Members, Number of Wagons

May 20	Jim Bridger (guide); L. B. Statler, O. B. Whitford, B. F. Bisel, Abram Morgan	ca. 62-100 wagons, 300 men
May ?	Train of Independents Amede Bessett, John Richard, Jr., Baptiste Pourier, Jose Miravel	10 wagons
May 30	John Jacobs (guide), Howard Stanfield, William Bartlett, Jennison Perkins	67 wagons, 218 men
June 4	Capt. Allensworth, Cornelius Hedges	More than 100 wagons
June 10	Joseph Knight (guide), James Roberts, Robert Vaughn	129 wagons, 350-450 men
June 15	Capt. Joe Todd, William Alderson, John Alderson	46 wagons
June 22	"Rocky Mountain Bob" McMinn (guide), Charles Baker, William Atchison, Ethel Maynard, Rev. Jonathon Blanchard, Rev. Hugh Duncan	More than 100 wagons, 300 men, 15 families with children
June 24	Capt. Rollins (guide), William Haskell	More than 60 wagons, 200 men (30 wagons turned back)
July 13	Capt. Joseph Stafford, Frank Kirkaldie	70 wagons and ca. 125 men
Sept. 18	Jim Bridger (guide), Maj. John Owen, Samuel Anderson	ca. 10 wagons, 25 men

Frank Kirkaldie was a member of a train that departed Red Buttes on July 13 for the Bridger Trail. "I am on a new route to the gold regions--which has been opened the present season--Major Bridger having conducted the first train. . . . Our old Captain Stafford was unanimously elected Captain and the train comprises seventy wagons and about 125 men."²³ The final trip along the Bridger Trail was documented by the veteran trader and Indian Agent, Major John Owen in September and October 1864. This train was also guided by Jim Bridger, and seems fitting that he guided the first and last trains of the season. Traveling eastward on his trail, Bridger had returned to Fort Laramie from Virginia City. By August 3, he was reinstated as scout on the government payroll.²⁴

At the time of its publication, Owen's diary was considered the only extant discussion of travel over the Bridger Trail. "He [Owen] had often expressed interest in the possibility and creation of this road, and evidently seized the opportunity to use it with his wagons

during its construction, as a member of a train under the command of Bridger himself. Thus, he was one of the first to travel over it. Owen's diary of the journey, as here transcribed, is the only account of the sort that is known to exist."²⁵ Today several extant diaries, journals, and reminiscences correlate the discussion of the Bridger Trail as outlined in Owen's narrative of trail travel, and from the additional information, it is interesting to note that the trip made by Owen and Bridger was, in fact, the last trip made in 1864, not the first, as suggested by Dunbar and Phillips. Owen's first diary entries list approximately twenty-five men who made the trip; however, some of the names are scratched out, and Jim Bridger's name does not appear at all.²⁶

Regrettably, Owen failed to supply any figures for the number of wagons in the party; we can only estimate that it may have been between ten and twenty.

A small train departed on the Bridger Trail a few days behind Bridger's first party. This party, known as the Independents in diary entries, consisted of ten wagons. The men in this train were experienced traders and needed no guide, especially if they were only a few days behind the trace being made by Bridger's large

²³ Franklin L. Kirkaldie, "The Letters of Franklin Luther Kirkaldie, May 1, 1864--March 30, 1869," 14-16. Montana Historical Society, Helena. Franklin Luther Kirkaldie Family Papers, Typescript of Letters. SC 160, Folder 2/2.

²⁴ Cecil J. Alter, *Jim Bridger*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 309.

²⁵ Seymour Dunbar, ed., and Paul C. Phillips, *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen: Pioneer of the Northwest, 1850-1871*, 2 vols. The Montana Historical Society. (Portland, Maine: Southworth Press, 1927), I, 309.

²⁶ Dunbar and Phillips, *Major John Owen*, I, 310.

train. John Richard Jr., Baptiste Pourier, Amede Bessette, and Jose Miraval were the prominent members of the party.²⁷ Richard was the half-Sioux son of John Baptiste Richard Sr., who constructed the lower Platte Bridge on the Oregon Trail, six miles east of Fort Caspar, in time to serve the heavy emigrant traffic in 1853.

The availability of water and feed for their stock was of paramount importance to emigrants. This factor, coupled with the physical condition of the road, influenced their decision concerning which route to take as much or more than the threat of Indian hostilities. The only solution to lost livestock was to acquire replacement animals at one of the forts located along the Oregon Trail or possibly at the posts near the Platte bridges. When animals gave out or died along the trail, substitutes were often provided by "others in the train who had a surplus of animals."²⁸ The Bridger and Bozeman Trails each possessed water and forage vital for livestock; however, there were portions of each trail where water and grass for the stock was sorely lacking, especially the former. The time of season along the trail and the order in which the trains departed the trailhead not only dictated the flow and quality of the water along the trail, but the availability of pasture for the stock as well. Overall, the Bozeman Trail possessed adequate to abundant sources of water and grass; while along the Bridger Trail, these essential natural resources were less available, and loss of livestock along the latter trail was the norm, not the exception, as Bridger Trail diaries make clear.

Emigrants taking the Bridger Cutoff in 1864 found the first portion of the trail to Badwater Creek quite arid, even in the spring; consequently, grass and game were not abundant. The availability of resources increased as emigrants continued north along the trail; however, there were some long drives without water in the central portion of the Big Horn Basin. Water, grass, and game increased as the trail entered Montana and passed down Clarks Fork to its junction with the Bozeman Trail near Rock Creek. Several emigrant diaries contain daily descriptions of the resources, or the lack thereof, and the condition of the road, which varied from good to poor. The most prevalent observation by emigrants along the first seventy-five miles of the trail was the lack of good water, or any water at all, and limited pasture for their animals. Howard Stanfield recalled during the first week of June that "the first three or four days on the new road feed and water were most fearfully scarce that we crossed what was almost a desert 70 miles in width on which we had a tight

pinch to get grass for our stock."²⁹ Water was in such short supply that several of the trains were forced to dig wells in the dry stream beds to get any water for their stock.³⁰

Once emigrants reached Badwater Creek at the base of the Bridger Mountains, water and feed ceased to be such a serious problem. Most of the trains found their first good supply of water and grass on Bridger Creek, a tributary of Badwater. Most of the trains stopped at this location to rest their tired stock and recuperate. Bridger Creek provided a practical and well-watered, albeit uphill, route over the mountain range to the Kirby Creek drainage that led down to the Big Horn River, three or four days journey to the northwest. Substantial evidence exists to support the portion of the trail route along Bridger Creek. Extant on a sandstone cliff face just east of Bridger Creek are emigrant names incised on the rock formation, located east of the ranch house on Herold Day's Bow and Arrow Ranch. One of the emigrants, W. D. Walden, most likely accompanied Bridger in the first train. Walden inscribed a June 1, 1864, date on the rock, along with his name. Bridger departed on May 20, allowing eleven days to travel from Red Buttes to the location of the cliff on the east side of Bridger Creek. Major Owen's diary mentions that it took 9 days (September 18-26) to reach Bridger Creek, and on the 10th day, they passed this point along the trail.³¹ As shown on the 1885 GLO plats, the Bridger Trail continued north into the southeastern region of the Big Horn Basin via the Kirby Creek drainage that would take the trail to the Big Horn River. The diaries of Charles Baker, Cornelius Hedges, and William Haskell discuss the travails of traveling up Bridger Creek and down Kirby Creek.

The first train guided by Jim Bridger was also the first to reach the Big Horn River. Here they built a ferry or log raft to carry the wagons over to the west side of the river. The various trains that followed all utilized the ferry to transport the wagons, while swimming the stock across the river. The exact location of

²⁷ Gray, *Bridger and Bozeman Trails*, 42.

²⁸ Thomas B. Marquis, *Memoirs of a White Crow Indian* (Thomas H. LeForge). (New York: The Century Co., 1928, 10.

²⁹ Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, p. 57.

³⁰ James Roberts, "Diary of James Roberts: Notes of Travel While on My Journey Overland from Dodgeville, Wisconsin to the Gold Mines in Idaho, 1864." Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. Typescript of original diary. Collection No. 0082a/2396-15, pp. 22-23. Along this stretch of the trail in September, Major Owen commented about "the remains of quite a number of dead oxen strewn along the road . . ."

³¹ Dunbar and Phillips, *Major John Owen*, I, 311-12.

the river crossing is not known, although it occurred somewhere below the mouth of Kirby Creek and present Lucerne, Wyoming. The 1892 GLO map does not show the crossing; it shows the Bridger Trail heading east along the south side of Kirby Creek, where it terminates short of the Big Horn River opposite Lucerne. The probable and logical place to have crossed the Big Horn River seems to have been north of the mouth of Kirby Creek. Diarists Cornelius Hedges, Charles Baker, William Atchison, William Haskell, and Howard Stanfield all discuss crossing the river on a ferry built by Bridger's train and left to be used by those trains that followed. After coming down Kirby Creek and reaching the Big Horn, none of the diarists speak of continuing downriver before crossing. The GLO plats do not depict the exact route of the river crossing; however, they do show that once across the river, the travelers remained on the west side as they headed north. Confusion occurs with regard to the location of the crossing when Major Owen's description of the river crossing is utilized out of context. This is possible due to the time of year (October 9) when he and Bridger reached the Big Horn River, the time of year when the river would be at its lowest possible average flow.³² All trains arriving earlier in the season (June and early July) ferried across the river due to high water and had some difficulty as indicated by the diary entries above. Not so for Owen's party. There is no mention of a ferry, and he matter-of-factly states that his party crossed the river three times!

The Bridger Trail departed the Big Horn River near Nowood Creek and headed northwest approximately thirteen miles to the Greybull River, the next important source of water along the route; however, there is no crossing of the river shown on the GLO survey plats. The trail stops just short of the river. None of the emigrant diaries mention crossing the Greybull at a specific location; although some do mention crossing, they only discuss the mileage, which varies. Because the water level fluctuates between early June and August due to spring rains and melting mountain snow pack, there may have been more than one practical location to cross the river, depending on the date of arrival. Once across, they traveled along the north side of the Greybull before again heading north. Howard Stanfield crossed the Greybull on June 13 and "camped on the opposite side that night." The next day, "we only made a short drive of 12 miles up the river and camped" to rest and water the livestock.³³ According to the GLO plats, the trail on the north side

of the Greybull is approximately fifteen miles from the crossing to what is called the big bend in the river where the trail leaves the Greybull and heads north.

The exact route of the Bridger Trail north of the Greybull to the Shoshone River and Montana border is more problematic. The original GLO plats were surveyed between twenty and thirty years after the trail was traversed by the ten emigrant trains in 1864. The trace left by hundreds of wagons and thousands of head of stock seems likely to have been quite visible during the land survey and is included on the maps to the exclusion of anything else in this region at the time of the surveys. The 1864 diaries and the GLO plats, help dispel what appear to be inaccuracies regarding the route on the USGS maps, in oral histories, and personal reminiscences.

The 1883 GLO plat picks up the trail about one mile north of the Greybull, and the trail north to the Shoshone River passed through some of the driest country in the Big Horn Basin, especially for those trains coming through in July. To complicate matters, the emigrants first had to negotiate Emblem Bench, circumvent Bridger Butte, then make a steep descent down the Devil's Backbone into the Coon Creek Valley. According to the GLO plats, the distance along the Bridger Trail from the Greybull River to the Shoshone River was approximately twenty-seven miles. The trail went due north across Emblem Bench and Dry Creek, then northwest, passing southwest of Bridger Butte to the descent of "Devil's Backbone," a typical badlands environment, then across Coon Creek and Whistle Creek before reaching the Shoshone River. Field observations noted that swales and a narrow road cut were apparent on the steep descent of the Devil's Backbone, validating the descriptions of the descent found in the emigrant diaries; they discuss the route north to the Shoshone and the distances traveled coincide with the mileage shown on the GLO plats. Howard Stanfield's train left the Greybull River camp early on the morning of June 15; "a part of us reached Stinking Water [Shoshone River] about seven in the evening after a long hot dusty [sic] thirsty drive of 28 miles." On July 6, Charles Baker "[d]rove 30 miles without grass or water--Very desert country--arrived at Stinking River at 5 O.C. Went down 2 mi. & camped."³⁴

³² Dunbar and Phillips, *Major John Owen*, 1, 313.

³³ Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, 61.

³⁴ Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, 61-62; Baker, *Diary*.

The first three trains, led by Jim Bridger, John Jacobs, and Captain Allensworth, respectively, were within a few days of each other from the time of their departure at Red Buttes. This is evident by the reference to the use of the ferry at the crossing of the Big Horn River. In fact, on June 17, Hedges "Met two of Bridger's men and found they were only 12 miles ahead."³⁵ Therefore, although mileage estimates varied due to the record keeping of the individual diarist, it seems highly improbable, because the trains were traveling so close together, that any train took a route other than the one laid out by Jim Bridger, who was not only guiding the first train but also making improvements along the route. Stanfield and Hedges accompanied the second and third trains, respectively, and surely followed on the heels of Bridger's train; and Baker and Haskell were a couple of weeks behind Hedges.

The Shoshone River was a suitable location for resting stock and emigrants after the long, dry, arduous push north of the Greybull. By June 18, four trains, including the small train of independents, were now camped on the north side of the Shoshone.³⁶ Bridger's lead train had traveled slower than the rest, because he located the initial route and did some work on the road. The two trains led by Jacobs and Allensworth had caught up to Bridger, who was resting on the north side of the river. A member of Jacobs' train, Howard Stanfield wrote on June 18, "We are at the same camp we had last night where we have remained all day we are the middle train of three. Bridgers numbering one hundred wagons $\frac{1}{2}$ mile ahead and Allensworth consisting of 88 wagons just crossed the River today so there are a goodly number of white men in this part of the country at the present time."³⁷ Cornelius Hedges, a member of Allensworth's train, wrote on June 18, "Bridger's and Jacob's [sic] trains near us All sorts of stories--206 miles on the Cut-off."³⁸ This accumulative presence of Euro-Americans in 1864 was undoubtedly the largest concentration, to date, of non-Indians ever assembled in the Big Horn Basin.

Bridger's train departed the river the next day on June 19 and headed up Sage Creek toward the Montana border.³⁹ However, since June 19 was a Sunday, Stanfield and Hedges and their respective trains remained encamped; it is possible that Bridger's train may have stayed as well.⁴⁰ While the trains laid over along the Shoshone, several men went out on prospecting forays and some went out to hunt. Names and dates incised on sandstone rock formations at Signature Rock (Site 48BH188), between Cowley and Byron, correspond to the individual dates of various Shoshone River

crossings and layovers. They also indicate the route taken up the valley of Sage Creek. Field reconnaissance confirmed the location and authenticity of these inscriptions.⁴¹ Benton Garinger of Ohio left his name for posterity on June 19; he may have been a member of Bridger's train, but more likely was a member of one of the trains led by either Jacobs or Allensworth. Travelling with Allensworth, Hedges stayed in camp on June 19 and 20. Stanfield laid over on June 19, and on the 20th, he "traveled a short distance today. . . . stoped [sic] the rest of the day to let the stock graze . . . near small creek";⁴² this small creek was most likely Sage Creek, approximately five miles north of the Shoshone. On June 29, T. B. McNeal of Ohio added his name to the cliff face. Although it is not clear which train he was with, it appears that he accompanied the fourth train that was about eight to ten days behind Allensworth. Three weeks after Bridger, J. Housel left his name on July 8; he was probably a member of Charles Baker's train that crossed the Shoshone River on July 8.⁴³ Four additional names, W. M. McCoy, D. A. Leaky, Wm. Henry, and S. Magee, were added to the cliff face on July 14, corresponding to William Haskell's train that crossed the Shoshone River on July 14. These inscriptions are very significant because they substantiate the correct route of the Bridger Trail through an area deficient in historic evidence concerning the trail route.⁴⁴

The trail headed northwest and north from the Shoshone approximately five miles to Sage Creek. About one mile south of Sage Creek, the trail passed through a small gap in Signature Rock that is part of

³⁵ Cornelius Hedges, "Diary of Cornelius Hedges," 15. 1864. Montana Historical Society, Helena. Typescript of original diary. Cornelius Hedges Family Papers, MSS Collection 33, Box 2, Folder 4.

³⁶ Gray, *Bridger and Bozeman Trails*, 43.

³⁷ Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, 63.

³⁸ Hedges, *Diary*, 15.

³⁹ Gray, *Bridger and Bozeman Trails*, 43.

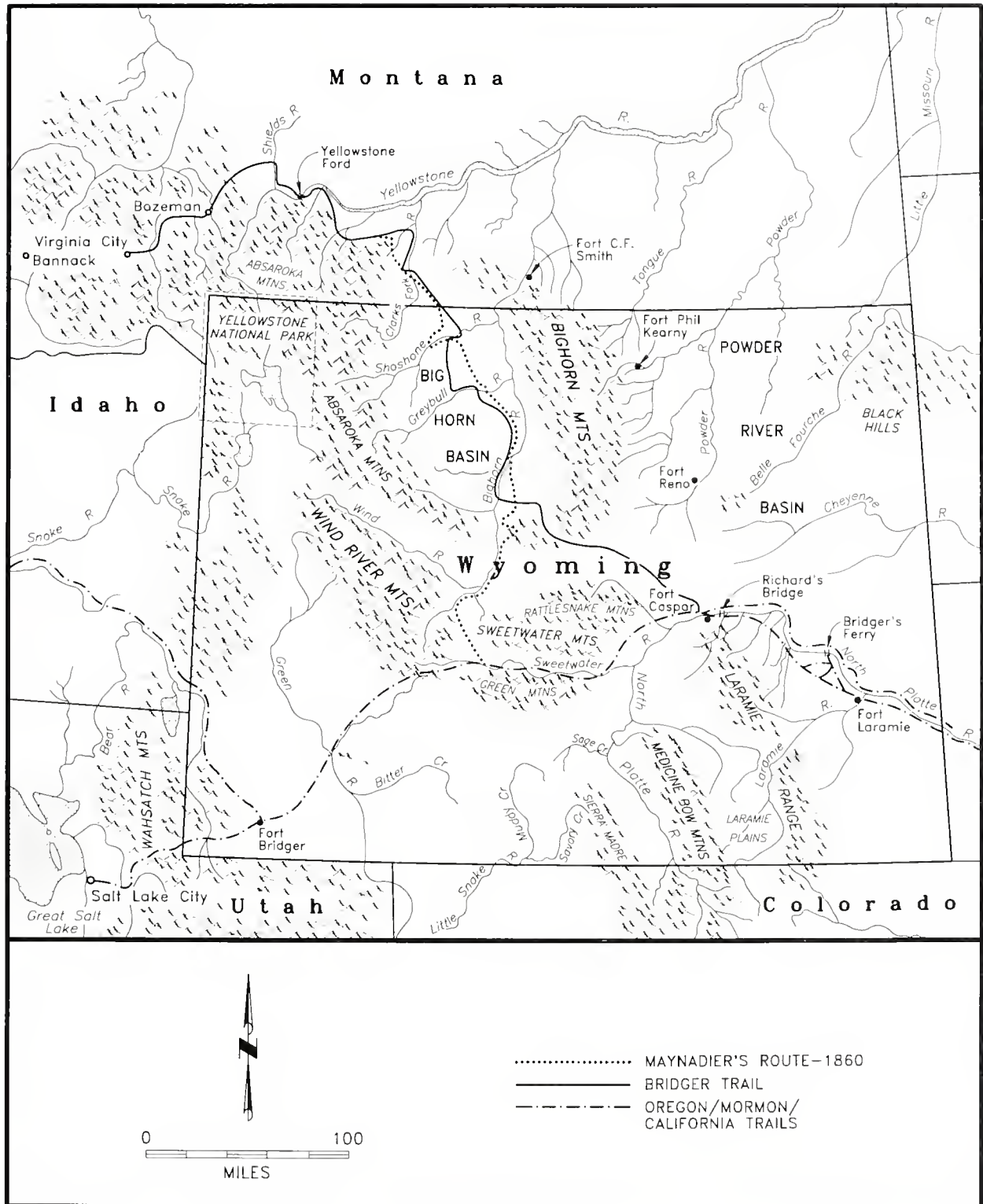
⁴⁰ Hedges, *Diary*, 15; Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, 64.

⁴¹ The author visited the site in July 1996. Photographs and videotape were taken on-site.

⁴² Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, p. 64.

⁴³ Baker Diary.

⁴⁴ William S. Haskell, "William S. Haskell Diary," 14. Montana Historical Society, Helena. Typescript of original 1864 diary. SC 806, Folder 1/1. The inscriptions incised on the sandstone formations at Site 48BH188 are weathering quite well, and most are very legible; some, however, are becoming hard to read, due to wind and water erosion, and some, like D. A. Leaky, while quite legible, have suffered from the impacts of gunshots by vandals.



Map by Suzanne Luhr, TRC Mariah Associates

the larger divide between the Shoshone River and Sage Creek. The trail diaries, GLO plats, the emigrant names on Signature Rock, and field reconnaissance, leave little doubt concerning the route of this portion of the Bridger Trail north of the Shoshone to Sage Creek, a route that is not shown on the USGS topographic quadrangles. Once in Montana, the trail headed north-northwest along the east side of Sage Creek to Bridger Canyon and the headwaters of Bridger Creek then continued due west along the north side of Bridger Creek. Heading due north, the trail left Bridger Creek and headed to the crossing of Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River, southeast of Bridger, Montana. Bridger's route continued north along the west side of Clarks Fork to Rock Creek. This route is part of the Nez Percé Trail.⁴⁵

The 1864 Bozeman Trail, heading southwest along the north side of Rock Creek, merged with the Bridger Trail where it first crossed Rock Creek, approximately one mile east of Joliet. Bozeman crossed Clarks Fork just above its confluence with the Yellowstone and proceeded south up the west side of Clarks Fork to Rock Creek. However, the 1891 GLO plat shows the *Old Bozeman Trail* merging with Bridger's trail approximately three miles southeast of Rock Creek near Edgar, Montana. This is the route opened by James Sawyers' expedition in summer 1866; prior to that, the Bozeman Trail merged with the Bridger Trail at the above mentioned location east of Joliet. From that point on, except for minor variations, the combined trail followed Bridger's route to Virginia City.

The trail continued northwest across Rosebud Creek and the Stillwater River west of Absarokee, Montana, then west to Bridger Creek and down that creek to the Yellowstone River. It continued west along the south side of the Yellowstone, crossed Boulder River near Big Timber, Montana, and continued along the Yellowstone for about sixteen miles to the crossing near Hunter Hot Springs and present Springdale, Montana, approximately seven miles east of the Shields River.⁴⁶ In 1866 John Bozeman established a ferry at the Yellowstone ford. Once across the Yellowstone, members of the three leading trains melded together so that the individual trains could no longer be distinguished. Jim Bridger led most of the wagons west along the north side of the Yellowstone, then north up the Shields River, west up Brackett's Creek and over the southern end of the Bridger Mountains, then down Bridger Creek to the Gallatin River west of Bozeman, Montana. John Jacobs took a few wagons over what is now Bozeman Pass to the Gallatin River.⁴⁷

Between July 5 and 8, Stanfield described the disintegration of the trains along that portion of the route from the Yellowstone to the Gallatin River Valley.

[L]eft the Yellowstone. . . . our old train (what was left of it) Split all to pieces some going with Jacobs other with Bridger. . . [6th] Caught up with Bridger. . . . our old guide Jacobs concluded that he knew of a shorter & better road . . . to our destination and consequently turned off with eleven wagons instead of the 66 . . . he had up to Clarks fork. I understand that we have a mountain to cross tomorrow our train number from two to three hundred wagons. . . [8th] we emerged from the cañon [Bridger Canyon] onto the open plain the train is now broken to peices [sic] and it is who can reach Virginia first the plain being covered with small train of two to six wagon. . . . We crossed the Gallatin fork of the Missouri this afternoon.⁴⁸

A synthesis of source materials has resolved multiple questions, inaccuracies, and romantic assumptions associated with the Bridger Trail. The daily crucible of emigrants who originally used the trail, its resources, and terrain, are now significantly understood; many of their identities have come to light; available statistical information concerning occupational and settlement patterns, albeit fragmented, has been compiled for those emigrants who traveled first to Virginia City in search of gold, then dispersed to settle in the valleys and communities of western Montana; and, for the first time, there is a distinct understanding of the overall trail route, with emphasis on detailed clarification of previously ambiguous portions of the route.

⁴⁵ Although labeled the Nez Percé Trail on modern maps, the trail is not labeled as such on the 1900 GLO plats. This trail is associated with the flight of Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés during the summer of 1877, as they exited Yellowstone Park with the U.S. Army in pursuit, bound for exile in Canada. The Bridger Trail was laid out 13 years prior to this event. The label Nez Percé Trail is misleading. Although they had adopted the mounted bison economy and seasonally migrated onto the Northern Plains to hunt, the Nez Percés were unfamiliar with this route prior to 1877. See Francis Haines, *The Nez Percés: Tribesmen of the Columbia Plateau*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), 208, 298-303; Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 190-93.

⁴⁶ Vaughn, *Then and Now*, 34; Maynard, *Reminiscence*, 36, SC 2008, Folder No. 1.

⁴⁷ Marquis, *White Crow Indian*, 13; Gray, *Bridger and Bozeman Trails*, 43. To avoid confusion, it should be noted that there are three different Bridger Creeks along the route from the Wyoming-Montana border to the Gallatin Valley.

⁴⁸ Detzler, *Stanfield Diary*, pp. 70-71.

The Bridger Trail route portrayed above is substantiated by a review of the original GLO survey maps. The trail is labeled on these maps variously as *Bridger Trail*, *Bridger Road*, or *Old Bridger Road*. Several diaries and journals compiled by the original travelers along the Bridger Trail in 1864 corroborated the route shown on the GLO plats and the approximate distances between notable landmarks and water crossings. Therefore, the GLO plats, in conjunction with contemporary observations, appear to be the most reliable source for mapping Jim Bridger's trail.

In the past, Lieutenant Maynadier received credit for discovering the Bridger Trail route north through the Big Horn Basin.⁴⁹ However, he did not traverse the Red Buttes to Badwater Creek section; he did not know of or travel the Bridger Creek/Kirby Creek route over the Bridger Mountains; he failed in the initial attempt to find an adequate route once in the southernmost region of the Big Horn Basin; he followed a decidedly different route between the Greybull and Shoshone Rivers, which included crossing the Shoshone far upstream from that of Bridger in 1864; and he followed a different route once along Clarks Fork to the Yellowstone. This clearly places the responsibility for locating the Bridger Trail route with Jim Bridger.

In retrospect, the most significant aspect of the Bridger Trail is its importance as an interregional transportation route in the West that funneled a large number of emigrants (approximately 25 percent of the 1864 population of Virginia City) into Montana during a single trail season, many of whom settled, rose to prominence in their communities, and made important contributions to territorial development and, later, during statehood. Occupations for those emigrants listed in the pioneer register (90) who took the Bridger Trail are overwhelmingly oriented toward agriculture: farmers and stockmen (23.3 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively, and 4.4 percent who practiced both, for a total of almost 40 percent). Occupations in the mining industry came in a distant second (10 percent); women, whether wives or unmarried young women, accounted for a larger number of the population than miners (14.4 percent). Other occupations listed included merchants (5.6 percent), freighters and teamsters (3.3 percent), ministers (3.3 percent) lawyers (2.2 percent), and carpenters (2.2 percent). Bankers, physicians, blacksmiths, wagon makers, editors, brewers, and real estate speculators, each made up approximately 1.1 percent of those who arrived via the Bridger Trail. These ninety emigrants made up 5 percent of the 1,808 pioneers listed in the register, representing a diversified cross section of those settlers who made Montana their home.⁵⁰

The Bridger Trail was a viable alternative to the Oregon Trail and its variants to reach Virginia City, Montana. Contrary to Reynolds' report of 1860, Bridger's trail not only successfully traversed the Bighorn Basin, a "region. . . totally unfit for either rail or wagon roads," but proved to be much more popular with emigrants in 1864 than the Bozeman Trail; its viability as an alternative route was assured when at least ten trains traveled the Bridger Trail versus only four that took the Bozeman Trail that year. However, sparse resources--water, forage, and game--rugged terrain, the lack of travel on either trail in 1865 when the federal government closed the route to emigrant traffic, the fact that the United States Army favored the Bozeman route in 1866, and the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869, were important factors that rendered the Bridger Trail obsolete and precluded any major use of the trail as an important regional transportation route until after initial settlement in northern Wyoming Territory during the early 1880s.

That Jim Bridger was fortunate to live a long life, ensured he was the only practical choice as guide for important duty assignments; and when military explorations began in the 1850s, Bridger was one of a few left, and undoubtedly the best yet alive, to be entrusted with the lives of enlisted men, emigrants, and government and private property. In one respect, Bridger's participation in an astounding number of important endeavors that, in large and small ways, helped to discover and settle the West, is due in large part to his being in the right place at the right time in American history; therefore, Bridger's rich historical legacy as one of the most renowned explorers and guides in American history lends important significance to the trail that bears his name.

⁴⁹ Jackson, *Wagon Roads West*, p. 267; Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, p. 420.

⁵⁰ Sanders, *Pioneers Register*.

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ENIGMATIC ICON:

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HARRY YOUNT

BY
WILLIAM R. SUPERNAUGH

The resource protection focus of today's law enforcement Park Ranger of the U. S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service (NPS) is, by some historians, traced back to Yellowstone, the first national park, and one of its earliest employees, Harry Yount. Today, Harry Yount is securely positioned in the legend and culture of the Service. Thanks to the efforts of NPS historians and ephemera collectors, Harry Yount is commemorated and remembered by the bureau which did not come about until 1916, 35 years after he was employed at Yellowstone.

Best known for the two reports he wrote as Yellowstone's first and only gamekeeper, Yount's life before and after his brief but compelling tenure at the Park remains virtually untold. This article attempts to gather the available references from official records and the popular literature relating to the NPS into a single monograph from which more scholarly investigations may, in time, flesh out the story of the man who lies behind the legend and myth which has given rise to a figure of heroic proportion.



Yellowstone National Park collection. National Park Service

Harry Yount

*William R. Supernaugh is superintendent of
Badlands National Park, South Dakota.*

Little is known about Yount's early years. His given name had, until recently, been lost and he has been referred to in print variously as "Harry C. Yount" and "Harry S. Yount."¹ The most informative look into Yount's personal history comes from a series of interviews conducted between 1921 and 1924, by Thomas J. Bryant and published in the *Annals of Wyoming*.² This is the only known first-person account of Yount's early life and, while tantalizingly incomplete, it offers valuable insights into his pre-Yellowstone years.

According to Bryant's recordings, Harry Yount's family tradition referred to the arrival of two brothers with the name of "YOUNKERS" who settled at Younkers (now Yonkers), New York. One of the brothers, it was said, moved west to Pennsylvania where the family name underwent a change from Younkers to Yount. Harry indicated to Bryant that he had a brother who lived in Illinois and two brothers who had settled in California many years previous to the interview. Bryant concluded that Harry had lost all contact with his relatives over the years.³

Family lore aside, nothing has yet been found to substantiate the early New York ties. Berks County, Pennsylvania appears to be the ancestral home of the Younts in America who trace their roots back to Hans George and Anna Maria Jundt who arrived, with four of their five children, at Philadelphia in 1731, from a village on the Rhine in Alsace.⁴ The fifth child, Andrew Yount, arrived in Philadelphia in 1751. His children all migrated to Randolph County, North Carolina, and are shown as landowners by the 1780's, joining their cousins whom had made the trip much earlier. Andrew has been identified as the progenitor of the Quaker branch of the Yount family; a son, John, migrated to Missouri, as did his grown children, all of the Quaker faith. Harry Yount's place of birth is now believed to be Washington County, Missouri although his exact birth date remains unconfirmed from public documents.⁵

Even though 1847 is given as Harry's date of birth in one history of Wyoming,⁶ Bryant's article speculates that 1837 would be more believable based on his perception of the physical evidence of aging and talking to residents of Wheatland who stated he, "...was born in the same year as Grover Cleveland...", placing his birth in 1837.⁷ The Census, Army Pension Records and Yount's enlistment papers provide a more probable birth date of 1839;⁸ Harry provided March 18 in a 1915 Pension affidavit. These sources show that "Harry" was christened Henry S., by which he continued to be officially known during his Army years (1861-

1865) and continuing through his lengthy correspondence with the Bureau of Pensions between 1898 and 1915.

Washington County, Missouri, lies approximately 40 miles southwest of St. Louis. The 1850 Census for Harmony Township, Washington County, Missouri, identifies eleven-year-old Henry, son of David Yount,

¹ Scoyen, Eivind T. "The Evolution of the Protection Function." Lecture manuscript dated August 11, 1965, 14. Scoyen, born at old Fort Yellowstone in 1896, and retiring from the National Park Service as Associate Director in 1962, often lectured at the Service's Albright Training Center, Grand Canyon, Arizona, on aspects of Service history. His notes, apparently incorrect, read "Harry C. Yount." A published interview with Yount by Thomas Julian Bryant, "Harry S. Yount," *Annals of Wyoming* 3 (1925-26), 171, is consistent with other published accounts. Bryant's interview includes a reference to a slate colored marble or fine granite stone carved into the shape of a "book" which he was shown by Yount and which was incised, "Harry S. Yount, Scout and Guide" on the front.

² Bryant, "Harry S. Yount." Bryant first met Harry Yount on May 15, 1921, as Harry and two other veterans of the Civil War were speaking at a program and dinner arranged by a Wheatland, Wyoming, schoolteacher. The subsequent friendship that grew between the aged frontiersman and Bryant led to his recording the reminiscences Yount shared up until his death on May 16, 1924.

³ Henry was the tenth of ten children born to David Yount and Catherine Shell. Edith W. Huggins, *The Yount (Jundt) Family in Europe and America* (Raleigh, N. C.: Privately printed, 1986), 218. Brothers Caleb (born 1832) and John (born 1835) are shown to have emigrated to the Napa Valley of California. It is presumed they joined their uncle, George Calvert Yount, an early California frontiersman and reportedly the first white man to settle, in 1831, in the Napa Valley.

⁴ William C. Yount, A brief sketch of the origin of the Yount family in America (1936). The relationship of David to John Yount has been established as son to father by genealogical work compiled by Edith W. Huggins in her work on this line of the Yount family. (See footnote 3). David was part of the Quaker immigration from North Carolina to Missouri. Two Yount families, headed by Ira and Azariah Yount, lived near David in 1850 (and each with a son, David), and are two of the older brothers of Henry (Harry). They are buried in a Quaker Cemetery near Potosi, Washington County, Missouri.

⁵ Civil War Pension Records file SC 825, 586. His birth date reads "March 18, 18(unreadable)". Huggins' genealogy of the Yount family provides a date of March 18, 1839. This is consistent with both the census records and subsequent military records.

⁶ *History of Wyoming* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Company, Publishers, 1903), cited in Bryant.

⁷ Bryant, 169.

⁸ The 1850 Washington County, Missouri census for Harmony Township, conducted December 9, 1850, lists household 1258 as David Yount, a farmer of 55 years of age, born in North Carolina, and three sons; Caleb age 18, John age 15 and Henry age 11, placing his date of birth in 1839. The 1840 census again lists David with one son under the age of one; this is most likely Henry (or Harry).

as having two older brothers, Caleb and John, still living at home. This is consistent with the 1840 census for the same area, which places one male under five and two between 10 and 15 in David's household.⁹ During his youth he apparently received some education in Missouri as he was shown to be passably literate in later years.

Harry was a two-time Union veteran of the Civil War, serving first by enlisting in Co. F, Phelps' Regiment of Missouri Infantry. During this six-month term of service (November 19, 1861 to May 12, 1862), he participated in the events leading to the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern (Pea Ridge), Arkansas, March 6-8.¹⁰ On March 5, 1862 he received a leg wound, was captured, marched to Fort Smith, Arkansas, and held as a prisoner of war for 28 days before being exchanged.¹¹ Yount, who re-enlisted shortly after mustering out of Phelps' Regiment in May, was enrolled in Co. H, 8th Missouri Cavalry for a three-year term of service starting on August 9, 1862, in Springfield, Missouri, and ending on July 20, 1865, in Little Rock, Arkansas.¹² The 8th Missouri served in the border states of Missouri and Arkansas, seeing action in eleven engagements. Harry rose through the ranks from private to corporal, then sergeant and, finally, serving as Company Quartermaster Sergeant.

Following the war, he came to Wyoming Territory in 1866 via Nebraska City, Nebraska, site of the first Fort Kearny, hiring on as a "bull whacker" for the Army along the Bozeman Trail between Fort Laramie and Fort C. F. Smith in southern Montana, east and north of present-day Yellowstone National Park.¹³ This was during a period of unrest on the frontier and Yount was reportedly engaged in several skirmishes with the Sioux and Cheyenne while delivering freight.¹⁴

He also worked for a time as a buffalo hunter in this general area of Wyoming.¹⁵ According to one source, Yount had worked as a hunter, trapper, guide and scout between his discharge from the Army in 1865 and his employment at Yellowstone in 1880. For a number of years he served as a contract hunter for the Smithsonian Institution, providing specimens of western fauna for exhibits.¹⁶

⁹ *U. S. Census Records*, Missouri, 1840 and 1850. We also learn that David Yount was born in North Carolina in 1795 and that he was apparently a widower or living alone by the time the 1850 census was conducted. David does not appear in the 1860 enumeration for Missouri but his death is given as 1881 in Huggins, with burial at Lewisburg, Dallas County, Missouri.

¹⁰ *Civil War Records*, National Archives. The Official Records indicate the 25th, 35th, 36th, 44th, and 59th Ill.; 2d, 3d, 12th,

15th, 17th, 24th, and Phelps' Mo.; 8th, and 22d Ind.; 4th and 9th Iowa; 3d Iowa Cav.; 3d and 15th Ill. Cav.; 1st, 4th, 5th, and 6th Mo. Cav.; and artillery units from the above states were represented. Henry S. Yount enlisted in Phelps' Regiment at Rolla, Missouri October 19, 1861.

¹¹ Yount apparently was troubled by leg problems ever after. His pension claims cite early damage to both legs (rheumatism) attributed to his having to march barefoot over the cold, wet roads to Fort Smith following his capture. Under the provisions of the Act of June 27, 1890, Harry applied for an Invalid Pension for the war related injuries to his feet. He was awarded a monthly pension of \$6 in November 1892, retroactive to November 1890. This was raised to \$12 in July 1900. Under the provisions of the Act of May 11, 1912, Harry applied for an increased pension and though the records provided by the National Archives do not indicate if the request was honored, the *Wheatland World* reported in January 1913, that Harry's pension was retroactively increased to \$25 per month dating from May 27, 1912.

¹² National Archives, Veterans Record; SC 825,586. He enlisted in Capt. Jones' Company (which soon became Co. H) of the 8th Missouri Cavalry at Lebanon, Missouri on August 9, 1862 as a Private. He was promoted to Corporal April 14, 1863 and again to Sergeant, December 9, 1863. On June 13, 1864 he was promoted to Company Quartermaster Sergeant. Harry mustered out at Little Rock, Arkansas on July 20, 1865.

¹³ John W. Henneberger, "The History of the National Park Ranger," unpublished manuscript, 1959, 24. An earlier manuscript prepared by Henneberger and which served as a draft of the larger treatise, "Preserve and Protect," gives the date of 1866, which appears to have been extracted from Bryant's work.

¹⁴ Bryant wrote Harry was involved with Indians while first working for the Army in Wyoming. In the account he reports a party of Indians followed his ox-drawn wagon, part of a larger bull train, from near Fort Laramie to Fort C. F. Smith. By remaining awake and constantly moving for four days and nights, the train avoided coming under attack. Harry is reported to have fired his carbine in response to one Sioux warrior who repeatedly fired upon the train from horseback, hitting and apparently killing his horse. Yount recounted the danger of hunting bear and elk in the "early days" due to the activities of hostile Indians. While believing the Indians would kill him if they could, he seemed not to blame the Indians for defending what was their country originally.

¹⁵ Bryant, 168. Bryant relates an episode with Yount in which he states he had, "killed many buffalo for tourists at Cheyenne, getting a dollar apiece for buffalo tongues alone." Yount also restates the national policy of the time regarding the relationship between the Plains Indians and bison. "He said it was a pity to kill off the buffaloes, which were here in immense numbers, but it was the only way to get rid of the Indians, as the buffalo was their main source of subsistence."

¹⁶ Bryant, 168. Yount provided study skins, including mountain lions and "pheasant." The latter likely refer to sharp-tailed or sage grouse inasmuch as the ringneck pheasant was not established in Wyoming until the 1880's. Citing Yount's previous work collecting specimens of wild animals for the Smithsonian as part of the Hayden Expedition, Spencer F. Baird of the Smithsonian Institution contacted Yount in October, 1875. A long list of Rocky Mountain mammal specimens was requested for use in the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia the following year. (Smithsonian Institution Archives, personal correspondence). Yount likely complied with the request. Photographs of the exposition reveal a number of wildlife mounts in the exhibit halls.

During a significant portion of this time, Harry Yount had served as a guide and packer for the Hayden Geological Survey, spending seven summers in New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Colorado and Wyoming.¹⁷ Between expeditions with Hayden (approximately 1872-79), Yount spent at least six winters hunting and trapping the Laramie Range of mountains below Laramie Peak, where he evidently maintained a cabin.¹⁸

Yount never married. He became engaged to Estella Braun prior to his arrival in Wyoming. Braun, from a farming family in Michigan, had later relocated to Detroit. She was employed as a telegraph operator with Western Union. During an expedition to the Four Corners region in 1867-8, he learned that his fiancé had been killed while on vacation when her Detroit-bound train was involved with a collision with another engine.¹⁹

Yellowstone National Park's second superintendent, Philetus W. Norris (1877-82), set the stage for Yount's entry into the annals of NPS history.²⁰ A lack of funds and general understanding of the remote nature of the area handicapped Yellowstone's first superintendent. He left in 1877, annoyed at Congress' failure to adequately fund the park's development. Norris was more successful in obtaining funds from Congress and an initial appropriation of \$10,000 was made in 1878, followed by an increase to \$15,000 in 1880.²¹ Norris used \$1,000 of this windfall to pay for a year-round position of "Gamekeeper", which had the exclusive objective of reporting on the wildlife of Yellowstone National Park and protecting them from undue slaughter.

No one claims knowledge as to just how the gamekeeper concept came about. Clearly, Norris wanted to take action to protect the wildlife from indiscriminate slaughter; hunting was not regulated in Yellowstone until 1877 and not prohibited until 1883. He indirectly proposed the position in his report of 1877 wherein he suggested establishing a game reserve in the park's northeast corner, particularly the broad Lamar River valley.²²

It is likely that Superintendent Norris' policy of wildlife protection and management led to the appointment of Harry Yount as "gamekeeper" in 1880. Although instructed to report to Superintendent Norris, Yount received his appointment from Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz and Henneberger surmises that the position was created by someone in the Secretary's Office.²³ As to why Yount was selected, the record remains unclear. His past experience, familiarity with the park and contacts with people integral to the park's

exploration and establishment doubtlessly were factors.

Henneberger speculates that Norris likely first met Yount during the 1878 Hayden expedition to Yellowstone for which he was listed as a "wrangler and packer."²⁴ Too, as a long-term temporary employee of the Department of the Interior, (Hayden's Survey was chartered by the Secretary and later folded into the U. S. Geological Survey) he may have already been known within the Interior bureaucracy.²⁵

¹⁷ Henneberger, citing Bryant. The dates of Hayden's subsequent explorations are not noted but this likely covers the period 1872-1879. Bryant detailed several incidents that Yount related from his travels with the Hayden expeditions, including visits to the cliff ruins of Mesa Verde and the Grand Tetons.

¹⁸ Bryant, 165. Bryant recorded several stories about tracking and killing grizzly bears near Laramie Peak and in the Laramie Range. These include references to his returning to his cabin for supplies or a team of mules, but the general location is not known.

¹⁹ Bryant, 167-8. It is unknown if Braun was employed out west or where the train wreck occurred that reportedly took her life.

²⁰ Hiram Martin Chittenden, *Yellowstone National Park* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1954), 104-106. Norris succeeded Nathaniel P. Langford, chosen to be the Park's first superintendent following Yellowstone's establishment in 1872. A principal in the 1870 Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition he later spoke and wrote widely on the previously ignored natural wonders encountered on that expedition.

²¹ Norris served until February 1882. A noted writer about and explorer of the park, his prime drive seems to have been the construction of roads within Yellowstone to increase access and lure potential commercial interest. He was responsible for having built much of the original infrastructure of the park. Henneberger, 31.

²² Aubrey Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1977), I, 252. Norris proposed that the big-horn sheep and herds of buffalo, elk, and deer be protected (and incidentally domesticated and sold) by, "...two or three spirited, intelligent herdsmen...". Merrill D. Beale, *The Story of Man in Yellowstone* (Yellowstone: Yellowstone Library and Museum Assoc., 1956), 241, briefly outlines the history of hunting and game protection in Yellowstone.

²³ *Annual Reports of the Superintendent*, Yellowstone National Park, 1880. Appendix A, 50. Yount was in Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, when notice of his appointment letter, dated June 21, 1880, reached him. He accepted at once but was hindered by unusually deep snows and floods in the mountains, requiring him to travel by train and coach via Ogden, Utah, and Bozeman, Montana, finally reaching park headquarters on July 6. The position paid \$1,000 per annum and was not removable by the Superintendent, thus truly a Secretarial appointment. Henneberger, 23.

²⁴ Aubrey Haines, *Yellowstone National Park Its Exploration and Establishment* (Washington: NPS, 1974), 143. Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano appointed Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden in 1871. His report on the Yellowstone region added to the push to set the area aside as a government reservation. He returned to Yellowstone in 1878; Yount is listed as a member of the Survey party.

²⁵ Haines, 143. The U. S. Geological Survey was created in 1879 by the blending of Hayden's Survey with that of two others, King's and Powell's.



Yellowstone National Park collection, National Park Service

Harry Yount in the mountains

"Rocky Mountain Harry" Yount has been described as, "... a typical leatherstocking frontiersman. He was rough, tough, and intelligent."²⁶ After building a winter cabin in the park in 1880, he became one of the first white men known to spend time on a year-round basis in Yellowstone. Independent and resourceful, able to subsist on his own without close supervision, and having a familiarity and knowledge of the natural processes surrounding him, Harry Yount has become an archetypal model for the National Park Ranger. Horace Albright, a founding father and the second Director of the National Park Service, wrote of Yount, "After that first winter alone, with only the geysers, the elk and the other animals for company, Harry Yount pointed out in a report that it was impossible for one man to patrol the park. He urged the formation of a ranger force. So Harry Yount is credited with being the father of the ranger service, as well as the first national park ranger."²⁷

Harry Yount, for all that his tenure at Yellowstone spanned a mere 14 months, left a lasting legacy. His articulate and insightful 1880 "Report of Gamekeeper" documents his travels through the Park and his general observations on wildlife and the inability of one person to adequately protect the park's resources.²⁸ He calls for the establishment of a seasonal workforce to protect the wildlife and other park

resources from the depredation of park visitors; a model that the NPS follows to this day. In addition to his role as gamekeeper, Yount's duties included providing meat for the employees, guiding visiting dignitaries and accompanying Superintendent Norris on his explorations of the Park.

²⁶ Beale, 241.

²⁷ Horace Albright and Frank J. Taylor, *Oh, Ranger!: A Book About the National Parks* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1929), 5-7, and frontispiece illustration of Harry Yount. This passage is also quoted in Haines' book.

²⁸ Yount, 1880. Shortly after his July entrance on duty, Yount met Secretary Schurz and his party, guiding them from near the southwest corner at the South Madison to the northeast corner at Clark's Fork canyon. Upon his return to Mammoth Hot Springs he circumnavigated Yellowstone Lake and explored the area around Lewis and Shoshone Lakes, remarking on the abundance of wildlife. After once again returning to Mammoth Hot Springs, he set out to construct his winter camp at the confluence of the East Fork (Lamar) and Soda Butte Valleys at a point where he could guard the elk and bison wintering grounds against hunters. He concludes his report, dated November 25, 1880, with a strong recommendation that protection of the wildlife be extended parkwide. This task, he laments, is too much for one man and he urges appointing, "...a small, active, reliable police force, to receive regular pay during the spring and summer at least...". He continues, "It is evident that such a force could, in addition to the protection of game, assist the superintendent of the Park in enforcing the laws, rules, and regulations for protection of guideboards and bridges, and the preservation of the countless and widely scattered geyser-cones and other matchless wonders of the Park."

Yount spent the winter of 1880-81 in his cabin at the confluence of the Lamar River and Soda Butte Valleys, occasionally joined by one or another of the park employees wintering over at Mammoth Hot Springs, but generally alone from November to April.²⁹ His second and final report in September of 1881 documents his natural history and meteorological observations and summer travels. Also, similar to the one prepared in 1880, he again calls, "... for a small reliable police force as the most practical way of seeing that the game is protected from wanton slaughter, the forests from careless use of fire, and the enforcement of the other all laws, rules, and regulations for the protection and improvement of the park."

Superintendent Norris, upon his return to the Park in the spring of 1881 expressed disappointment in Yount's performance as it pertained to road maintenance and development, a task upon which Norris apparently placed high priority.³⁰ There was an obvious difference of opinion as to the worth of the gamekeeper position. Yount felt that the task of safeguarding the park's wildlife was more than one person could reasonably be expected to do. During this time, Norris wrote Secretary of the Interior Schurz, indicating that he was recommending the position of gamekeeper be discontinued, effective July 1, 1882. He expressed the opinion that Yount, while, "... a sober and trusty man I should ordinarily hire at regular wages as an excellent hunter, still he is that and nothing else, being by tastes and habits, a gameslayer and not a game preserver."

In a June letter to Schurz, Norris stated he had arranged for Yount to resign at the end of the season and return to Cheyenne. Indeed, Yount tendered his resignation in his 1881 Report of Gamekeeper, citing the need to, "... resume private enterprises now requiring my personal attention."

Harry Yount's life and travels between his departure from Yellowstone in the fall of 1881 and 1912, when he settled in Wheatland, Platte County, Wyoming, approximately 70 miles north of Cheyenne, is as yet largely undocumented.³¹ He lived for a time in Uva, Laramie County, Wyoming; pension records in his file dated between June, 1891, and March, 1893, provide his place of residence. Harry reportedly homesteaded on a tract of land at the foot of Sugar Loaf Mountain and subsequently sold it to H. M. Small. His obituary reported his nearly 40 years of prospecting in the Laramie Mountains (especially the Bluegrass District) where he, in conjunction with sev-

eral partners developed extensive copper and graphite prospects. His ability to maintain a modest means of support in his later years is attributed to his successful development and sale of one claim there. Yount also discovered and developed a marble quarry west of Wheatland in the 1890's.³² He is reported to have maintained an interest in prospecting and mineral development up until his death. The *Wheatland Times*, May 22, 1924, issue, which reported Yount's death, indicates that on the day prior to his death, he had been seeking a ride into the hills west of Wheatland where he believed a gold outcrop lay.

Yount died in Wheatland a little after noon on May 16, 1924. According to witnesses, he had made his regular morning walk to downtown from his home in the west part of town, a "modest three room brick building," with a frame addition. As he was returning home, "while near the Lutheran church he was seen ... to sink to the earth where he soon expired." Yount's death certificate gives the cause of death as, "Suspended Heart Action" and gives his age as 88; the latter now appears to be in error and his age was more likely 85. In accordance with the provisions of his will, drawn up by Mr. Bryant, he was buried in the Lakeview Cemetery at Cheyenne, "... where all the old timers he used to know were buried."³³ His grave, marked by a military style marble headstone, reads "Q.M.SGT HARRY S. YOUNT CO.H MO.CAV."

Harry is gone but his name lives on. Yount (or Younts) Peak, a major peak in the Absaroka Range located on the east side of the Continental Divide ap-

²⁹ Yount, *Report of Gamekeeper*.

³⁰ Henneberger, 25.

³¹ Bryant, 171. Yount responded to Bryant in 1923 that he had lived in Wheatland for, "ten or twelve years." Pension records dated in May 1912, provide a Wheatland address.

³² *Wyoming, Platte County Heritage*, (Wheatland: Platte County Extension Homemakers Council, 1981), 474-5. Harry S. Yount filed on 140 acres of land in Laramie County at least as early as 1887. He later lost this through foreclosure where it was purchased by Henry Sturth at a sheriff's sale in August, 1895. Yount and several partners received a patent March 1, 1892, for the "Yount Marble Placer Mining Claim" in Sec. 3, T24N, R70W, Sixth Principal Meridian in Laramie County, comprising approximately 156 acres. However, Yount had already deeded his one-eighth interest to Harry Crain in 1889. Over time, principal ownership of this claim also devolved to Sturth. As of the 1970's, the Yount Marble Placer Claim had been sold several times and finally had been put into operation, producing crushed marble for landscaping, aquarium gravel and architecture.

³³ Bryant, 175.

proximately 20 miles southeast of Yellowstone National Park's southeast corner is named in commemoration of this legendary frontiersman.³⁴ The headwaters of the Yellowstone River arise on its flanks and flow into the Park and Yellowstone Lake.

Harry Yount is credited with setting the standards for performance and service by which the public has come to judge the rangers of today. Now, he lends his name to a recognition program that honors NPS employees for the art and science of "rangering." The National Park Service, in 1994, established the Harry Yount Award, given to individual employees whose, "... overall impact, record of accomplishments, and excellence in traditional ranger duties have created an appreciation for the park ranger profession on the part of the public and other members of the profession"³⁵

³⁴ Chittenden stated that the peak commemorates Harry Yount. However, *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, (1976 ed.), 1611, attributes the peak's name to George Concepcion Yount (1794-1865). George C. Yount, Harry's uncle, is credited with extended trapping trips into the west during the late 1820s, prior to his settling in California in the 1830s. Despite this contradiction, documents provided the author by the U.S. Geological Service, Office of Geographic Names, substantiate Chittenden's claim. Both Mae Urbanek, *Wyoming Place Names* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing, 1967), 223, and Orrin Bonney and Lorraine Bonney, *Guide to the Wyoming Mountains and Wilderness Areas*, (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1977), attribute the name of 12,165-foot Younts Peak to Harry.

³⁵ USDI, NPS, 1995. Memorandum from Regional Director, Midwest Region to Superintendents, Midwest Region, dated January 10, 1995. 6 p. The 1995 award recipient was Richard T. Gale, Deputy Chief Ranger of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C.; the 1996 recipient was Tommie Patrick Lee, Chief Ranger of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Arizona-Utah, and the 1997 recipient was Jim Brady, Superintendent of Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska. The 1998 Harry Yount Award recognized Mike Anderson, District Ranger at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, North Carolina.

Goldilocks Revisited

By Rosemary G. Palmer

In the mid-1960s, historian Francis Haines published an article titled "Goldilocks on the Oregon Trail" in which he reported that pioneers told their most colorful stories years after an actual event. But because Haines did not find similar experiences recorded in trail diaries, he assigned the tales to the realm of folklore.¹

"One such story which crops up again and again in various reminiscences but is never found in the journals or diaries, might be called: Goldilocks on the Oregon Trail," he wrote. In this story, Haines explained, Indians on the trail were fascinated with Goldilocks—a fair-skinned, golden-haired emigrant child three years old—and they wanted to trade an "entire herd" of horses for her. More often, though they offered five to twenty animals. Of course, the pioneer mother refused.²

From his study of trail diaries and reminiscences—how many he did not specify—Haines learned that only in reminiscences did "Goldilocks" travel "with many a wagon train."³ Sometimes Indians made several attempts to buy the female child. Other times a train captain teased Native Americans by agreeing to trade a white child or young woman for ponies. According to Haines, "this joking offer by the captain of the train, or some other man, ...is a motif which recurs frequently." In fact, about a third of the "Goldilocks" stories contained the joking friend or relative.⁴ Haines concluded that the tales were based on two common Anglo-Saxon misconceptions: other people envied white children and Indians bought their wives. Was Haines' assessment of "Goldilocks" stories accurate?

Although Francis Haines identified many "Goldilocks" tales in his selected reminiscences, only sixteen of 453 accounts of young people who crossed the plains noted such an incident. Since the exchange usually involved children or young women, it seems they might have included the experience more frequently in their writings. Fifteen of the sixteen documents involved a female in the trade. Six writers stated the event happened to them, nine mentioned someone else in their train, and one recalled general information

about buying a "white squaw." Half of the sixteen accounts described the incident as a joke.⁵

From his unspecified number of diaries, Haines found only two which described Indians bargaining for children. Both were written in 1853. Celinda Hines wrote that an Indian woman on her way to the Shoshone country offered to trade her baby for a skirt. In another diary Harriet Sherill Ward recorded that an Indian would not sell his pony but would swap it for Francis Ward, an emigrant girl of seventeen.⁶ Neither account mentioned joking about the exchange. Of twenty-three diaries, letters, and journals by young pioneers, one diarist did record this type of jesting. Fifteen-year-old Mary Eliza Warner wrote in her 1864 diary: "Uncle Chester traded Aunt Lizzie off for three ponies but she would not go." According to Aunt Lizzie's trail diary, Indians bargained for her two different times.⁷

¹ Francis Haines, Sr., "Goldilocks on the Oregon Trail," *Idaho Yesterdays* 9 (Winter 1965-1966): 27-30.

² Haines, 27-28.

³ Haines, 27-28.

⁴ Haines, 28.

⁵ See Rosemary Gudmundson Palmer, "Voices from the Trail: Young Pioneers on the Platte River Road Between 1841 and 1869," Ph.D. diss., University of Wyoming, 1997. This study analyzed 23 diaries and letters and 430 reminiscences of children and young adolescents who crossed the plains on the California-Mormon-Oregon Trails.

⁶ Haines, 29; Celinda Hines, "Life and Death on the Oregon Trail," in *Covered Wagon Women*, 11 vols. Kenneth L. Holmes, ed., (Spokane: Arthur E. Clark and Co., 1983-1993), 6:120. According to Haines, Celinda Hines said the Indian wanted to trade her baby for a "skirt." In the *Covered Wagon Women* account, the word was "shirt."

⁷ Warner, "Diary," 8; Merrill J. Mattes, *Platte River Road Narratives*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 587.

John Unruh described the "Goldilocks" theme as "one of the basic components of reminiscent accounts." He reported that reminiscence writers "were fond of magnifying and even inventing such episodes"; however he believed 'not all such incidents can be relegated to the realm of folklore.' Unruh referred to a few trail diaries which described the event.⁸ In addition to those mentioned by Haines and Unruh, several other diarists recorded the experience. In 1850, Indians wanted to buy Angelina Farley's child for ponies.⁹ Also in 1850 near Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Sophia Goodrich said that a Sioux "wanted to trade a horse for a white woman."¹⁰ On her way to Denver in 1860, Helen Clark made three separate entries about Indians wanting to trade for her. West of Fort Kearny she wrote,

This morning we go 3 miles from camp and meet Indians moving—come to the wagon and wanted to have a pony for ME, and Mother guessed as I was the only papoose she had she couldn't spare me. He also wanted to give a pony for Mrs. Wimple & Mr. W. Thought as she was the only one, he could not spare her conveniently today.¹¹

Helen was twenty years old and single; Mrs. Wimple was near her age. Later, in the Cheyenne region, Helen said, "We saw some Indians that offered 5, 6 and 10 ponies for me and Mrs. Wimple. One wanted to sell his pony & get her and whisky."¹² Helen's final experience included joking.

Three Indians passed us today horseback and they stopped as they passed Mr. Kline, Mrs. Wimple and me, and Mr. Kline wanted to know what they would give for ME, and one, the chief, held up all his fingers and Mr. Kline asked him if he had three ponies, he gave assent and made room on behind for me when Mr. K. backed out.¹³

In an 1861 diary F. W. Blake wrote that two Sioux Indians "met our Train yesterday. They were mounted on ponies. One of them enraptured I suppose with the sight of the girls offered to barter his poney away for one of them, he wanted one with dark hair poor chap he was doomed to disappointment - he might have struck a bargain with some poor henpecked fellow."¹⁴

From these contemporary trail accounts, it appears that the "Goldilocks on the Oregon Trail" motif was based on fact, at least in origin. English folklorist George Gomme claimed that folk customs or beliefs had their roots in real historical events.¹⁵ What produced the "Goldilocks" roots? Several historians provide possible insight. James Axtell noted that during the colonial period Native Americans sometimes cap-

tured and adopted white women and children to replace family members who died. Most of the young captives were carefully chosen to maximize their adjustment into Indian society.¹⁶ According to Peter Stern, Native American raiders of the Southwest wanted women and children captives, partly to replenish tribal numbers after losing them to war and disease. They knew that children under twelve assimilated more easily into a new culture.¹⁷ John Moore wrote that Cheyennes captured and traded women and children; they also intermarried to improve trade relations and strengthen military alliances. By 1880, adoption and remarriage had formed the bulk of the Cheyenne nation.¹⁸ Royal Hassrick stated that the polygamous Sioux stole wives and adopted children. If a family member died, parents sometimes asked to adopt someone else's youngster as a replacement. The adoption was formalized by feasting, performing a giveaway ceremony, and presenting a horse to the birth parents.¹⁹ These statements show that some Native American tribes were accustomed to assimilating women and children from other tribes and cultures into their own. As a result, "Goldilocks" incidents could have occurred on the emigrant trail.

In his essay titled "Folklore and Reality in the American West," Barre Toelken stated that "Goldilocks" is a widespread legend in the Pacific Northwest and to an

⁸ John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 166-167.

⁹ Mattes, 251.

¹⁰ Sophia Lois Goodridge, "The Mormon Trail, 1850," in Holmes, 2 (1990), 223.

¹¹ John R. Evans, ed., *Two Diaries: The Diary and Journal of Calvin Perry Clark. Together with the Diary of His Sister Helen E. Clark* (Denver: The Denver Public Library, 1962), 26. All quotes have been copied as they were originally written, including any grammatical and mechanical errors.

¹² Evans, *Two Diaries*, 38.

¹³ Evans, *Two Diaries*, 39.

¹⁴ F.W. Blake, "Diary, 1861," April to December, 1 vol., manuscript, L.D.S. Church Library/Archives August 10.

¹⁵ William Lynwood Montell, *The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study in Oral History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), xvi.

¹⁶ James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 304, 306, 315.

¹⁷ Peter Stern, "The White Indians of the Borderlands," *Journal of the Southwest* 33 (1991): 266, 269, 270, 281.

¹⁸ John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne Nation: A Social and Demographic History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 186, 189, 262-263, 297, 318-319.

¹⁹ Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 43, 47, 110-111, 297.



extent throughout the West. In fact, families of pioneer descent have often shared tales about Grandma almost being sold to the Indians. Toelken identified these retellings as "culturally created truth." Legends like these help socialize people and place them in a cultural value system. Toelken wondered if the reality of "Goldilocks" was common or if it only happened to a few families on the trail. Like Francis Haines, Toelken questioned the practice since family diaries did not confirm family legends.²⁰ Since only sixteen of 453 childhood reminiscences mentioned "Goldilocks" experiences, the actual practice probably occurred less frequently than family legends suggest. Also, according to the L.D.S. Church Historical Department pioneer database search, only one diary and seventeen reminiscences of more than 2,000 first-person accounts described such an incident.²¹ The "Goldilocks" story may be more prevalent in second-hand retellings and family legends than in first-person documents.

The credibility of this motif in reminiscences is affected by who participated as "Goldilocks": the writer of the reminiscence, someone else in the train, a person days ahead on the trail, or a pioneer who did not record the incident but a descendant who did. Moreover, credibility decreases as time and distance between the writer and the event increase.²² Memories change

as individuals recall the past, for a recollection is a reconstruction, not a reproduction, of reality. Since a person is influenced by life's experiences, the circumstances under which something is remembered, as well as audience and purpose, influence what will be recalled and recorded.²³ Most of the 430 childhood reminiscences were written fifty to eighty years after the trek; as a result, time alienated the participants from the actual event. Some writers filled in or discarded memories; others infused them with adult vision, nos-

²⁰ Barre Toelken, "Folklore and Reality in the American West," in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, eds., (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 18-21.

²¹ Melvin L. Bashore and Linda L. Haslam, "Mormon Pioneer Companies Crossing the Plains (1847-1868) Narratives: Guide to Sources in Utah Libraries and Archives," folio text-searching database, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1997 (hereafter cited as L.D.S. Church Library/Archives).

²² Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher* 5th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), 158.

²³ Steven Rose, "Two Types of Truth: When Is a Memory Real, When Is It Not, and How Can Anyone Tell?" *New York Times Book Review*, 26 February 1995, 26; Steven Rose, *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Mind* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2.

talgia, or information obtained from research. of the fifteen reminiscences that mentioned a "Goldilocks" incident, almost all of the pioneer writers were between 63 and 81 years old—the oldest was 87. Yet most of the emigrants were between ten and fifteen when they crossed the plains—the youngest was six years old.

Since the past is a comfortable place to visit, particularly with family members, one individual's recollection may become a shared memory. Pioneer families often gathered together and spun tales of long ago. Sometimes they relied on each other for confirmation of what they remembered. "We need other people's memories both to confirm our own and to give them endurance," said David Lowenthal. Because reminiscences are usually shared orally before being recorded, they may merge into collective memory. According to Lowenthal, collective memory results when individuals "revise personal components to fit the collectively remembered past."²⁴ Francis Haines noted that Oregon settlers repeated trail experiences through annual meetings and publications of pioneer societies, newspaper accounts, and interviews.²⁵ Emigrants on other trails did the same. Gatherings of the Daughter of Utah Pioneers and Society of California Pioneers kept their own stories alive.²⁶ Sometimes pioneers embellished or added to their experiences as the years passed.

Harriet Sanders, for example, kept a diary during the trek and decades later composed a memoir with topics and details not found in her original writings.²⁷

From the fifteen reminiscences of 430 young people who traveled the Platte River route, seven "Goldilocks" stories occurred on the way to Oregon, five on the road to Utah, and three on the California Trail. Although there were twice as many Mormon accounts in the total documents, a greater percentage of Oregon Trail travelers mentioned "Goldilocks" incidents. Perhaps this corroborates with Haines' assessment of large numbers of Oregonians discussing them. Ten of the fifteen experiences took place before or in Wyoming. Three of these accounts referred directly to the Sioux tribe, and one identified the Cheyennes. This agrees with what the historians said about these tribes wanting to capture or trade for women and children.

The more realistic and unembellished "Goldilocks" reminiscences were the unpublished ones. Of course, writers may have invented or embroidered some of the stories, especially if they reported second-hand information. Eight of the fifteen childhood accounts described the experience happening to someone besides

the writer. Harrison Sperry only touched upon the topic when he said, "One day while we were traveling along, there was a large bank of Indians came to our camp and wanted to buy a white squaw.

They also wanted whiskey and sugar, but we had no white squaw or whiskey for sale."²⁸ Mosiah Hancock wrote,

When we got within about two days travel of Laramie, we just about got into some trouble with a large company of Sioux Indians. John Alger started in fun to trade a 16-year-old girl to a young Chief for a horse. But the Chief was in earnest! We got the thing settled, however, and were permitted to go without the loss of Lovina.²⁹

According to the diary of John D. Lee who traveled in Hancock's train, John Alger was a real person who emigrated with their company. Lee mentioned Alger's name but did not describe the experience Hancock related. In a diary entry at Ancient Bluff Ruins, Lee noted a band of Sioux camped near them. He wrote that

visits were made by this band of Sioux. They had a large American Flag which they hoisted. Returned by a Flag of Truce from the cos. who gave them Some little presents & some thing to Eat. They seemed perfectly Friendly & Harmless, wanted to trade for Some thing to eat. After smoking the Pipe by thier request a Letter of commendation was given them.³⁰

Why did Lee ignore the "Goldilocks" incident in his diary? Was he doing something else when Hancock witnessed the scene, or did Hancock create the tale years later? If John Alger, the story's antagonist, recorded the experience as well, its credibility would be more reliable. Even so, Mosiah Hancock did not fictionalize his retelling by adding flowery or unrealistic details to it.

²⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 196.

²⁵ Haines, "Goldilocks," 27.

²⁶ See Palmer, "Voices," 32.

²⁷ Clyde A. Milner II, "The Shared Memory of Montana Pioneers," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 37 (Winter 1987): 2-4.

²⁸ Harrison Sperry, Sr., "A Short History of the Life of Harrison Sperry Sr.," MS 722, L.D.S. Church Library/Archives, 4.

²⁹ Mosiah Lyman Hancock, "The Life Story of Mosiah Lyman Hancock," Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 26 (hereafter cited as BYU Special Collections).

³⁰ Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, ed., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876* 2 vols. (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1955)1: 55-56.

Several other young pioneers also recalled unembellished "Goldilocks" experiences about someone else in their train. In a published interview, Mrs. M. A. Gentry remembered hearing "many strange stories of queer bargains made by the travelers with the redmen." But because of what happened to her young married sister, she was willing to give credence to them. Mrs. Gentry wrote,

One day a chief came to our camp with five ponies, which he offered in exchange for my sister. Naturally, she was much frightened, and climbed into the wagon in haste and buttoned down the canvas flaps as tightly as she could. I was asleep at the time, and have no personal knowledge of the episode, and do not know how the men managed to decline the proposal without giving offense to the old chief.³¹

Mrs. Gentry was honest enough to tell the interviewer she did not know what actually happened when she could have embellished the story with shared or collective memory. Surely Mrs. Gentry's sister repeated the tale to family and other pioneers.

Olive McMillan Huntington's experience may have come from shared memory since she did not say what she actually remembered as an eight-year-old pioneer. Her mother most likely enjoyed telling it. When the family crossed the Missouri River, they fell behind the other wagons. That evening they set up camp, and two Indians paid them a visit. One of the men held Olive's one-year-old sister, and the child played with his beads. This pleased him so much that he asked to buy her. Mother shook her head but when her attention was taken from him he put sister up behind him and began backing away from the camp. He was within a few feet of some when mother saw him and calling to the other members of the party. He dropped sister and ran into the woods.³²

Annie Taylor Dee recalled as an eight-year-old on her way to Utah that

two big Indian chiefs ... wanted to trade two ponies for my cousin, Annie Maddock. She was a nice looking girl about seventeen years old. Of course father said, "No," and she hid in the wagon and we traveled on. The Indians did not make any trouble for us, however, as we feared they might. That was one ride that Annie got, and maybe the only one, as we were all supposed to walk.³³

These "Goldilocks" stories involving other individuals seem realistic based on the fact that the pioneers did not make a spectacle of their recollections. Instead

of exaggerating and fictionalizing, they stated what happened and moved on with their memories. Annie Taylor Dee's comment about Indians not causing trouble "as we feared they might" may have provided impetus for pioneers to magnify these situations as years went by and tales were told and retold.

While nine of the fifteen pioneers reminisced about "Goldilocks" occurring to someone else, six said it happened directly to them. Because these stories were not second-hand tellings, their credibility increases. Of course, they would be more believable if the young pioneers had written diary entries the day the incidents took place. In one of the six reminiscences, however, Belle Redman Somers was only six years old, and she did not record what she remembered personally. Most likely her mother kept the story alive, for Belle related the tale from her mother's point of view. Two Sioux Indians begged Belle's mother to swap the child for a pony.

My mother was thoroughly frightened and held me closely to her side. The two Indians then retired to the rear end of the Train, and while one sat on his horse and waited, the other Indian moved forward rapidly to our wagon and reaching forward made a quick movement to grab me.

Mother's frightened screams gave the alarm, while at the same time the Indian rapidly joined his companion, swung on his pony and dashed away at top speed. The men of the Train followed in hot pursuit but failed to capture the Indian.³⁴

Belle's trail experience was published in a California newspaper when she was eighty-two years old. The "Goldilocks" memory belonged to her mother.

Martha Gay Masterson recalled at age thirteen almost being sold to Indians. Her father jokingly asked some men who came to their camp to sell ponies "how many ponies they would give for Mamie or I." They offered "a number of their best," but Martha's father explained he was only teasing. The Indians "got angry and we got alarmed and ran and hid in the wagons. Father could not make them understand it was a joke.

³¹ Jennie E. Ross, "A Child's Experiences in '49," *Overland Monthly* 63 (1914): 302.

³² Olive McMillan Huntington, "Tells of Experiences Crossing the Plains," *Cowlitz County Historical Quarterly* 12 (February 1971): 1.

³³ Annie Taylor Dee, "Memories of a Pioneer" (N.p., n.d.), 13.

³⁴ Belle Redman Somers, "Crossing the Plains in a Covered Wagon in 1849," *The Argonaut* (August 29, 1925): 3.

He fed them and tried to talk them into a better humor. He never asked another Indian how many ponies he would give for one of us."³⁵ Martha's father probably helped supply the details as well as perpetuate the tale through the years. Elisha Brooks crossed the plains at the age of eleven. At eighty-one he recalled that Native Americans "were anxious to buy white children, offering a pony for a boy and two for a girl; but no mother wished to sell her children at that price, though our teamster tried to dispose of me in this way, claiming that was more than I was worth."³⁶ His was the only account that mentioned a boy being offered to the Indians.

In an unpublished interview, Margaret West Irvin recalled that Indians sometimes visited their camp. The eleven-year-old girl was frightened "because the Indians were crazy over my red hair and several times offered to trade a pony for me. When I would see them coming, my mother would hide me in the back of the wagon and throw a shawl over my head."³⁷ These young people did not embellish the "Goldilocks" experience; instead, it became one of many trail incidents.

In 1856, eleven-year-old Ellen Perks Johnstun emigrated from England, then walked to Utah alone in a Mormon handcart company. A Scottish teamster in her party had nothing to trade for a pair of moccasins and, being bothered by Indians, he "thought to get rid of them by saying he would trade me for them. The Indians were very pleased and would not change the trade. These Indians followed us for three days and I had to be hidden to keep them from stealing me."³⁸ One wonders where Ellen was concealed since the group pulled handcarts, and only a few supply wagons traveled with them. Because her family was not with her on the trek, Ellen could not build shared memory with them. Yet when she recorded the incident, she did not embellish it.

In contrast to the succinct descriptions just mentioned, Susan Johnson Martineau wrote both published and unpublished accounts of almost becoming an Indian bride at the age of fourteen. In the published version she added dialogue, embellishment, flowery description, and several days to her tale. In the unpublished memoir Susan said,

One night we camped near a band of Cheyennes. The following day, being rainy, we remained in camp. The Indians, old and young, came into camp trading moccasins and robes. Among the rest was a fine looking young Indian who wanted to buy a squaw, offering some

fine ponies, Andy Kelley asked him who he wanted, and I was pointed out as his choice on account of my dark eyes and rosy cheeks. Kelly finally made a trade for five ponies, a buffalo robe, and the silver ornaments on his hair. In the evening he came with his ponies. Kelley told him it was all a joke—that the girl belonged to another family. This made the Indian mad; he said a trade was a trade. Then Captain Markham came and explained to the Indian that Kelley was no good and had no right to do as he had done. The Indian finally went away very indignant.

By piecing Susan's two stories together, we learn that Kelly was a soldier who had deserted from Fort Kearny and joined the Mormon train. He soon revealed his true character by stealing some of the emigrants' clothes and later worked on Salt Lake City streets with a ball and chain attached to his leg. Susan continued her "Goldilocks" tale in the unpublished version with:

That night there was a high wind which blew down Aunt Sarah's tent. The tent was placed facing our wagon with the back toward a deep ravine full of willows. Aunt Sarah was holding the front tent pole and I the back while two men were driving stakes at the side. The night was pitch black, lighted at intervals by flashes of lightening. Suddenly I felt strong arms lift me to the back of a pony. I gave a terrified scream. At that instant a flash of lightening revealed the situation to the men who came to the rescue. I slid off the horse's back which the Indian mounted and escaped. He had been hiding in the ravine waiting his chance for revenge, and but for the flash of lightening I would have been carried off. An extra guard was placed for the night, but when morning came everything that was loose, such as frying pans, skillets, and other cooking utensils which had been put under the wagons, had disappeared, leaving the company short of these articles. The band of Cheyennes disappeared and were seen no more by the company.

According to Susan's published story in the Mormon *Young Woman's Journal*, the Cheyenne was approximately twenty years old. The deserting soldier told the Indian who frequented their camp, "You may have her for five horses, five buffalo robes, and some dried

³⁵ Lois Barton, ed., *One Woman's West* (Eugene, Oregon: Spencer Butte Press, 1986), 37.

³⁶ Elisha Brooks, *A Pioneer Mother of California* (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing, 1922), 22.

³⁷ Abbott Adams, "Covered Wagon Days As Related by Margaret Elizabeth Irvin," 21. MSS 1508, Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

meat, and two antelope skins." The amount bartered, however, was slightly different in the two accounts. After the Cheyenne agreed to the sale, he informed them he would come "one sleep" and bring the pay. Many were the mock congratulations showered upon the bride-to-be and requests for invitations to the wedding, much to the annoyance of the prospective The next morning affairs assumed a serious aspect. The Cheyenne appeared early in the morning with the horses... and demanded his bride.

When he was told it was only a joke, the Indian was more determined to obtain his bride. He had brought his goods "and would have her, or the company would be sorry." After being "absolutely denied," he "went away in furious rage, with dire threats of revenge." The train members feared attack, and they kept their guns ready to fight. A few days later "a terrible tempest of rain, hurricane, thunder and lightning came upon us." The darkness was "like that of Egypt," except for intermittent flashes of light. The Indian attempted to steal his bride but was "foiled of his prey," and he "dashed down among the willows and was gone in an instant." In this published account Susan added phrases which built suspense and moved the plot along, but she ignored details such as having pans and cooking utensils disappear from camp. Her purpose and audience in the journal article were to promote faith among young Mormon women. She acknowledged that the Lord saved her "by a single flash of light," and she added, "How wonderful are the ways of the Lord!"⁴⁰

These two accounts of the same event show that memories can change depending upon audience, purpose, and the circumstances under which they are remembered. Two other young people in Susan's company briefly recalled the journey, but neither mentioned associations with Native Americans. Only Thomas Forsyth wrote, "We passed lots of Indians on our way But They never gave us any trouble." Cholera was the main topic of discussion in both documents.⁴¹

Of the fifteen childhood "Goldilocks" reminiscences, nine were published during the pioneer's lifetime. Five writers, including Susan Martineau, exaggerated their tale. In a published interview Catherine Thomas Morris at the age of eighty-seven had created quite a yarn to tell. Her father was captain over 100 wagons, many children including ten-year-old Catherine, and twenty-five young men who drove the teams. Before the company parted for California and Oregon, a "young chap, along about 20 or thereabouts," named Steve Devenish traveled with

them. He was jolly, likable, and "a great hand at joking." Naturally, all the young ladies liked him. Catherine recalled that

some indians came to our wagon train and, like most Indians, they were very anxious to get hold of some of the white girls for wives. When Steve found what the chief wanted he pointed to one of the prettiest girls in the bunch and asked the chief what he would pay for her. The chief offered ten horses. Steve and the chief bargained back and forth and finally the chief raised his bid to 20 horses. Steve said, "Sold. She's yours."

Of course, the young men and women considered this great fun until the chief returned the next day with the horses and demanded the girl.

Steve explained that he was joking, that white people didn't sell their women for horses, that a white man didn't have to pay anything for a wife and sometimes she was dear at that price. The Indian couldn't see the joke. He became angry and demanded that Steve carry out his bargain. Finally the girl's father and my father, the captain of the train, sent the Indian about his business and we went on.⁴²

This was not the end of the story, however. Catherine continued, "That night the Indians swooped down on us and stampeded our stock." While the men were searching for the animals, the Indians "met them with a volley of arrows" and badly injured one of them. Unable to recover the stock, the company was forced to abandon half of its wagons. "Mother had to leave all of her treasured possessions" except one keepsake, a flatiron which she had received as a wedding gift. The men burned the fifty wagons so the Indians could not take them.

Meanwhile, the girl's father was going to kill Devenish. Because of the practical joke, the father had lost animals, a wagon, and most of the family's heirlooms. Instead, the men in the company decided to banish Devenish from the train, and the girls cried because they liked him. Now with fewer wagons, every

³⁸ Roberta F. Clayton collection, "Biographies of 195 Pioneer Arizona Women," MSS 715, box 2: 4, BYU Special Collections.

³⁹ Susan Ellen Johnson, "Record of Susan Ellen Johnson," copied by BYU Library, 1956, BYU Special Collections, 7-8.

⁴⁰ Susan E. J. Martineau, "Almost an Indian Bride," *Young Woman's Journal* 18 (June 1907), 264-265.

⁴¹ Thomas R. Forsyth, "Pioneer Life of T. R. Forsyth," MS 1969, L.D.S. Church Library/Archives; "Joseph Campbell," *Utah Pioneer Biographies* 44 vols. (1935-1964) 7:1, loaned by the Utah State Historical Society and typed by the Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁴² Mike Helm, ed., *Conversations with Pioneer Women by Fred Lockley* (Eugene, Oregon: Rainy Day Press, 1981), 135-136.

child over ten was forced to walk. Catherine remembered, "I was one of the ones that had to walk."⁴³ Her family settled in Oregon. This tale fits the exaggerated pattern Francis Haines found common in Oregon Trail reminiscences.

So do three accounts of men who traveled to Oregon and later published their childhood memories. Joaquin Miller prefaced his story with his mother's preconceived notions about Indians. He said that Native American women west of the Missouri River

were very fond of the white children and all the time wanted to touch and fondle them. Mother seemed afraid they would steal her little girl. She had read a yellow book telling all about how Indians would steal little girls! The Indian women were all the time trying to lay their hands on my little brother Jimmy's great shock of frouzy yellow hair, but he would run away from them and hide under the wagon.

After Miller's train passed Fort Hall and crossed the desert to Oregon, "a friendly Indian chief" on a "fine spotted horse" asked Mr. Waggoner, a member of their train, what he would give for his beautiful daughter. "The Indian was told in jest that he would take ten beautiful spotted horses, like the one he rode." So the chief

dashed off and the same day overtook us with the ten horses and a horde of warriors, and wanted the girl. of course, everybody protested, but the chief would not be put off. The Oregonians that had been sent out to meet us were appealed to. It was a very serious matter, they said. The chief was an honest man and meant exactly what he said, and had a right to the girl. The majority agreed, and thought the best way out of it was to let papa marry them. This seems strange now, but it was the Indian custom to buy wives, and as we were in the heart of a warlike people, we could not safely trifle with the chief.

The girl was about to throw herself in the river from the steep bluff where we were, at which the chief, seeing her terror, relented, and led his warriors off, scornfully refusing what presents were offered him for his forbearance.⁴⁴

Joaquin Miller did not record what he remembered about the encounter or even if he was present. Either his story came from collective memory or he invented it because it contains elements of a folktale. As an adult, Miller became a famous poet, and Bret Harte called him "the greatest liar the world has ever known." Miller

"wrote 90% fact and 90% fiction" and perplexed readers, critics, biographers, and historians.⁴⁵

Also emigrating to Oregon as a young boy, George Waggoner published a small book in which he described a "Goldilocks" tale about his sister. Along the Snake River, his company had "a genuine scare." Indians came to camp, "and one young warrior took a fancy to my sister Frances, and asked father how many horses it would take to buy her." At the time Frances was eighteen years old.

Father answered, with a laugh, that she was worth ten spotted ponies, as she was a very good cook and had long, beautiful hair, and moreover, already had Indian moccasins on her feet. The young lover took the whole thing in earnest and went away. An hour later he returned with a band of spotted ponies, and, reinforced by a dozen comrades, demanded his bride. His wrath knew no bounds when told that father was only joking. He was a warrior of fame with a battle name a yard long... and would stand no such foolishness; he had bought a wife and was going to have her, or his people would murder us all. He gave us until sundown to decide whether we were going to treat him right or not... [D]uring the evening several hundred of the red rascals came into camp, and all declared we should complete the bargain and give up the girl, or we would all be murdered.

The emigrants begged for more time, so the Indians agreed to make the exchange the following evening. Meanwhile, "women and children were in tears" and "the men looked pale and anxious." As the hours passed, other trains joined the frazzled company. Soon fifty-six men with guns were ready to fight. The next evening one hundred warriors in war paint approached the pioneers. "The young chief rode forward, and in a loud voice, demanded his bride, on penalty of death" if the emigrants did not meet his terms. But George Waggoner's father was now perturbed, and his "Jacksonian blood flashed in his face." With fifty-five rifles backing him, he knocked the brave to the ground "and gave him a most unmerciful kicking and drubbing," yet "not an arrow flew, nor a shot was fired." The Indians went away, but the emigrants prepared themselves for future attacks.⁴⁶

⁴³ Helm, *Conversations*, 136-138.

⁴⁴ Joaquin Miller, *Overland in a Covered Wagon* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1930), 73, 77-78.

⁴⁵ Margaret Guilford-Kardell, "Joaquin Miller: Fact and Fiction," *The Californians* 9 (November 1991): 26.

⁴⁶ George Waggoner, *Stories of Old Oregon* (Salem: Statesman Publishing Co., 1905), 12-14.

This recollection contains the suspense and detail of sensational fiction. No diary identified thus far described violence, attack, or retaliation by Native Americans when they could not buy "Goldilocks" on the trail. Even when overlanders joked about a trade and backed out, diary accounts did not mention war or the threat of it. Indians did not return with many ponies and "hordes of warriors" to claim their prize. But Waggoner's reminiscence is only one of fifteen that included such violence.

One aspect of the "Goldilocks" recollections by Joaquin Miller and George Waggoner needs further research. Did the two families cross the plains in the same company? If so, they probably described the same event. Both pioneers journeyed to Oregon in 1852, and Miller said the experience happened to a "Mr. Wagoner's" daughter. In other words, both used the name of Waggoner but with slightly different spellings. Miller wrote that "Mr. Wagoner" joked about trading his beautiful daughter to an Indian chief for "ten spotted horses." George Waggoner noted that his father joked to a young warrior about exchanging "ten spotted ponies" for his daughter Frances. In both recollections the young Indian returned the same day with the animals and "a horde of warriors" or "a dozen comrades." In both stories the young Indian was disgruntled when he could not obtain his bride. Yet while Waggoner described physical retaliation by Native Americans, Miller only noted that the girl considered suicide. Although the Waggoner family began their trek on April 21 and Miller's party started on May 15, they may have joined each other along the trail, then separated in Oregon since one crossed the Cascade Mountains and the other traveled along the Columbia River. Perhaps Miller, who published his trail experiences in 1930, borrowed parts of his tale from Waggoner, who wrote in 1905.

Fifty years after going to Oregon as a young boy, George Himes spoke at the annual Oregon Pioneer Association. In his address, Himes embellished his "Goldilocks" tale with adjectives and flowery description. He told fellow pioneers that while his company was camped near the Umatilla River,

a number of Indians rode up, all well mounted on a number of the most beautiful ponies that I ever saw up to that time, all dressed in gay costume with feathers and fringes abounding. One of the Indians, the leader of the rest, whom we afterwards found out was the noted Walla Walla chief, Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox, came near our camp, and seemed especially interested in my

baby sister, then ten months old, who had beautiful golden hair. I was taking care of the little girl at the time and noticed that the Indian eagerly watched every movement I made in trying to amuse the child. Nothing was thought of the Indian's visit that night, but the next morning, in some unaccountable way, hundreds of Indian ponies were found grazing near the camp.... The Indians were driving the ponies toward the camp under orders from Chief Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox who proposed to trade them for the little red-haired girl. This information was conveyed to my mother by Mr. Sarjent, and the offer of the great chief was respectfully declined, much to his apparent sorrow, as he rode away followed by his body guard, meanwhile striking his breast and... [m]eaning that his heart was very sick.⁴⁷

At least George Himes placed himself in the "Goldilocks" scene, which is more than what Miller and Waggoner did in their retellings. Still, this story has the folklore quality noted by Francis Haines.

Was Francis Haines' assessment of "Goldilocks" incidents correct? These experiences did crop up in reminiscences, and frequently with the joking offer, but not to the extent he suggested. According to the 453 childhood and more than 2,000 L.D.S. Church Historical Department accounts, not as many reminiscences included "Goldilocks" tales as Haines claimed. Because the topic was mentioned in several diaries, scholars cannot credit all such stories to folklore. The motif probably had its basis in reality. The most embellished "Goldilocks" experiences usually occurred in published recollections recorded years later. Some reminiscences were greatly exaggerated while others may have been invented, for some pioneers became great storytellers as the years went by. The diarists who described "Goldilocks" incidents did not embellish them nor did they elaborate on warring Indians when a trade was not completed. Although Native Americans were usually serious about the exchange, white people often joked in an Anglo-Saxon way which gave reason to misunderstanding between the two cultures.

One fallacy with Haines' article was the way in which he generalized. He did not specify how many diaries and reminiscences he studied to form his conclusions. Moreover, he said the "Goldilocks" motif did not occur in diaries. A few accounts have been found that

⁴⁷ George H. Himes, "Annual Address: An Account of Crossing the Plains in 1853, and of the First Trip by Immigrants Through the Cascade Mountains, via Natchess Pass," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association*, (1907), 144-145.

mention it. Also, Haines stated that "Goldilocks" stories crop up again and again in reminiscences. From the first-person accounts considered here, they do not seem as common as Haines purported.

Teasing about another culture may have contributed to real or contrived "Goldilocks" stories. Mary Ann Parker Wilgus remembered that her older sister "Emaretta had red hair and blue eyes and Father used to tease her by telling her the Indians liked red haired girls, so she always hid when she saw Indians for fear they would steal her."⁴⁸

Whether "Goldilocks" stories were real, embellished, or created, one cannot discount them all and relegate

them to the realm of folklore. Native Americans have their own colorful versions of "Goldilocks" stories—and they may not all be folklore either.

⁴⁸ Mary Ann Parker Wilgus "Mary Ann Parker, Reynolds, Van Norman, Wilgus," *Sutter Yuba Diggers Digest* 5, (July-December 1978): 112. Only thirty to forty years ago on a reservation in Eastern Utah, white adults told their children, "If you don't behave, I'll give you to the Indians." But turn-about is fair as well. One day a white woman was in a J.C. Penney's store in Roosevelt, and she overheard a mother from the Ute tribe say to her misbehaving child, "Suh, I give you to a white lady." Karen S. Heaton, interview with author, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 10 February 1998.

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Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat. by Gregory F. Michno. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1997. xvi + 336 pages. *Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index.* Cloth, \$36.00; paper, \$18.00.

It is hard to convey in a simple review just how good this book is, but it may be the best book every written about the famous battle of the Little Bighorn. In *Lakota Noon*, Gregory F. Michno has gathered together approximately sixty Indian narratives and produced a highly detailed reconstruction of the fighting which allows individual warriors to tell their stories through a chronological timeline of ten-minute intervals. So far as I know, this is the first time that any scholar has attempted such a compilation. Michno's results are astounding and will cause historians to reconsider some long held conclusions about the battle.

Every western historian with even a passing interest in Custer and the Little Bighorn has known about the Indian accounts. But these Indian histories posed almost insurmountable difficulties - the narratives are episodic and impossible to insert with accuracy into time and place. Michno notes that Native Americans tended to be excellent observers of what they personally saw and did, but they failed to provide transcribers and interviewers with continuity and context. Thus, when used by earlier scholars, Indian testimony often consisted of little more than literary seasoning sprinkled into standard military accounts. The latter were viewed as more reliable, in part due to the structural shaping of soldier stories. Of course, the limitations of the military viewpoint are obvious. For the critical last phase of the battle, first-hand military accounts are non-existent; while for the earlier action, soldier narratives may be tainted by self-interest, factual error, or mental trauma.

There are so many revelations in *Lakota Noon* that I will mention just a few of Michno's most significant contributions. The book begins with an assessment of the number of Indians in the valley. With rather convincing evidence, the author concludes that Custer faced far fewer warriors than is usually reckoned. Next,

Michno's description of the early phase of the battle shows that Reno's attack against the southern end of the Indian village was initially effective as it provoked considerable surprise and alarm.

The author throws aside the old tales that the Indians were aware of the coming attack. Many accounts commence with Indian warriors at rest, and when word of the attack spread throughout the village, the Indian response was slow. The collected stories also reveal remarkable insights into the Native American attitude toward warfare. When Reno struck, for example, a Lakota warrior did not just grab a weapon and ride into battle. There were personal preparations to be made - warpaint and other decorative items of personal power needed to be applied, a horse rounded up, and a decision made on whether to head directly to the fighting or first secure the safety of one's relatives.

Michno's Indian narratives leave readers with the feeling that Reno's effort might have proved successful if either the attack had been pressed more vigorously, or if Reno had possessed additional troops. At any rate, it was a close thing from the Indian perspective. Several miles to the north, Custer failed to realize that Reno was in retreat.

How long did the battle last? Michno's timeline indicates that battle lasted from around 3:00 p.m. when Reno rode toward the Hunkpapa encampment until approximately 6:00 p.m. when the last of the "Last Stand" survivor's fell. Three hours would be a longer period than some earlier writers have estimated, but the timeline seems believable and well reasoned. Sequencing the battle at twenty-two intervals is the book's most important contribution.

Did Custer die or suffer a severe wound in an attempt to cross the river's ford long before the Last Stand? Michno's detailed negation of this theory shows his impressive critical reasoning at work and makes for a fine historiographical study in itself.

Michno urges caution about citing the value of archaeological evidence recently unearthed. He notes that the site of the Last Stand was combed repeatedly by souvenir hunters over the many decades since 1876, thus destroying much of the original artifact record and matrix. Second, Indian accounts state that warriors

frequently picked up soldiers' weapons and commenced to fire at retreating cavalymen. Thus, some misinterpretations may arise in definitely determining whether artifacts indicate an Indian or cavalry position, or possibly both.

Lakota Noon is a wonderful book with surprises on almost every page. Everyone interested in Western American history needs to read this book. Those who specialize in military or Native American history will want this work for their personal library.

"These conclusions were not manufactured because there was any particular ax to grind," writes Michno. "I did not particularly care which coulee Crazy Horse rode in, but I definitely wanted to know which one he chose. The underlying deriving force behind this study was incontrovertibly to find out *what happened* at the battle by using the testimony of the only ones who could tell it" (p/ 296). With the publication of *Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer's Defeat*, the victors, for the first time, tell a better and more accurate history than the losers.

Gerald Thompson
University of Toledo

Frontier and Region: Essays in Honor of Martin Ridge. Edited by Robert C. Ritchie and Paul Andrew Hutton. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. xvi + 263 pages. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Martin Ridge is a founder of the Western History Association, biographer of Ignatius Donnelly, journal editor, educator, and defender of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis. Upon his retirement from the Huntington Library in 1992, some of his colleagues gave him a party at which a few read papers that explored familiar topics and questions about the West - where it is, what it is, what it is not, what we *think* it is, and some of those responsible for why we think of it as we do - and showed in the process that it is possible for western historians to practice their profession without excessively grinding axes on the bones of long-dead white guys. Their addresses are reproduced in this volume under the broad headings of geography, politics, culture, and historiography.

Editor Paul Andrew Hutton captures his readers early with a concise description of the twelve essays that tempts one to skip them altogether. But that would be a mistake.

One would miss midwesterner James Madison's pithy explanation of why the Midwest is not the West;

Donald Pisani's discussion of the region's mythic independence from federal power, citing the government's behavior, colonialism, and the West's own obsession for its share of the pork; James Ronda's discussion of Thomas Jefferson's fascination with rivers as routes for national expansion and as method to connect the east and west; and Melody Webb's essay on Lyndon Johnson's commitment to conservation and national parks, reminding readers that there was more to LBJ than the undeclared war that toppled his presidency.

Walter Nugent explores the West and notes that people who come out here find pretty much what they are looking for. Of particular interest to residents of the Equality State will be the discussion on cross country motoring, 1903-1930, which mentions Rock Springs, where a tourist "slept in bed that lived up to the town's name;" Rawlins, twice; Casper; and Yellowstone.

Charles Rankin introduces Union Army veteran, frontier journalist and vagabond Frederic E. Lockley, who commented on a variety of contemporary issues including Mormons, Indians, railroads, western agriculture, and monetary policy.

Richard Lowitt tells of the Senate debate on the creation of an artificial lake in Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley that pitted the interests of national preservationists against California's monied elites.

Cultural historians will enjoy the offerings of Richard White on Turner and Buffalo Bill in Chicago in 1893; Glenda Riley on the creation of cowgirl Annie Oakley; and Hutton's charmingly illustrated and not-to-be-missed essay on Davy Crockett, whose almanacs were published years after his 1836 death under the guise that he had prepared them well in advance of his departure to Texas.

Under the category historiography, Albert Hurtado offers an ironic, but short discussion about the time Hubert Bolton did not do his homework and authenticated a forged brass plate, attributing it to Sir Francis Drake's 1579 trip to California.. Howard Lamar discusses four literary Turnerians - Constance Rourke, Stephen Vincent Benet, Archibald MacLeish, and Bernard DeVoto who, Lamar points out, "were all overwhelmed by a sense of both the sweep and importance of American history" (p. 235).

As all of the essays come with traditional scholarly apparatus, the notes offer suggestions for further readings on topics or individuals of interest.

Peg Tremper
University of Wyoming

Religion in Modern New Mexico. Edited by Ferenc M. Szasz and Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. *Notes, bibliography, index.* x + 221 pages. Cloth, \$60.00; paper, \$19.95.

Ferenc Szasz has repeatedly argued that religion remains an overlooked themes in western history. *Religion in Modern New Mexico* is another attempt by him, with the aid of Etulain, to correct this oversight for New Mexico. This book consists of nine essays which were delivered at a 1993 Religious Cultures in Modern New Mexico Conference at the University of New Mexico. An eclectic mix of authors - doctoral students, historians, American studies scholars, and a communications professor - write about Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Jews, Native Americans, Mormons, and Asian religions. In putting these writings into print coupled with a lengthy annotated bibliography of supplementary religious articles and books, the editors have set out to kindle an interest in religion in western history.

Essays on modern Roman Catholicism survival by Carol Jensen, Native American religious freedom by Kathleen Chamberlain, Protestant evangelical rhetoric by Janice Schuetz, and comparative US-New Mexico religious history by Ferenc Szasz are well researched, coherent, and, most importantly, focused around an issue within twentieth century New Mexico.

The remaining essays are survey articles - Randi Walker on Protestantism, Henry Tobias on Jews, Leonard Arrington on Mormons, and Stephen Fox on Asian Religions. Their objective is to give readers an introduction into the topic and to serve as a catalyst for further reading or research. But compared to the other essays, they do not fare as well. Randi Walker's topic is too broad to be adequately covered in an essay. Leonard Arrington's examination of Mormons is as celebratory as it is analytical. He and Walker forget to take into account other issues, such as the lives of wayward members and of fields tried and abandoned. Readers ought to read Henry Tobias' book after reading his essay. Another particularly troubling feature is context. The editors' intent was to focus on religion in twentieth century New Mexico. Unfortunately some authors overlooked this limitation and plunge readers through pages of nineteenth century religious history as a prelude to understanding twentieth century religion. In some cases, the purpose was not always a balanced or necessary one. Lastly, many authors could have profited from the use of tables or maps to illustrate the distribution of churches and religious organizations.

Overall, *Religion in New Mexico* an interesting, informative book and shows that religion in the American West is not a static cultural theme. It should be a guide for other states and should stimulate other avenues of research both in New Mexico and western history.

Carl Hallberg
Wyoming State Archives

Recent Acquisitions in the Hebard Collection, UW Libraries

Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert, University of Wyoming Libraries

The Grace Raymond Hebard Wyoming Collection is a branch of the University of Wyoming Libraries housed in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room in the American Heritage Center. Primarily a research collection, the core of this collection is Miss Hebard's personal library which was donated to the university libraries. Further donations have been significant in the development of this collection. While it is easy to identify materials about Wyoming published by nationally known publishers, it can be difficult to locate pertinent publications printed in Wyoming. The Hebard Collection is considered to be the most comprehensive collection on Wyoming in the state.

If you have any questions about these materials or the Hebard Collection, you can contact me by phone at 307-766-6245; by email, thert@uwyo.edu or you can access the Hebard HomePage at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>.

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Wyoming Pictures



Restful times in ol' Rock River....

Both of these photographs, showing snoozing men, were made in White's Saloon in Rock River. The caption on the reverse side of the original photograph (left) read: "Business Dull." The photograph above was captioned: "Mr. August Kassahn, a local resident of the community for many years. The gentleman asleep is interior of White's Saloon at Rock River. The time is about 1917." Both photographs are from the Leslie C. John collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

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About the Cover Art

"Somewhere West of Laramie"

One of the most famous advertisements of all time, the ad was written by Edward S. Jordan, co-founder and owner of the Cincinnati-based automobile manufacturing firm which used the ad. The Jordan car was priced at about \$2,500 when the lowest priced Ford was selling for about \$500. The car was selling slowly so Jordan took a train ride to the West Coast, hoping he could come up with a plan to sell more vehicles. As Jordan's train passed through southern Wyoming, Jordan watched a beautiful young woman ride her horse alongside the train for a short distance. The sight impressed Jordan so much that he turned to a companion and asked where they were. "Somewhere west of Laramie," was the reply. Back home, Jordan sketched out an ad with the slogan. The ad first ran in Saturday Evening Post in June, 1923. Sales of the Jordan cars picked up immediately. Soon, other auto makers were using the new form of "image advertising." Despite the strong sales resulting from the ads, the Jordan company eventually failed, a victim of the Great Depression. The ad became legendary. In 1945, Printer's Ink magazine readers voted it the third greatest ad ever created.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Special Technology Issue

Wyoming Memories

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Special Issue: Technology

Three articles in this issue relate to various aspects of technology and how each had an influence on recent Wyoming history. Our "Wyoming Memories" section features an interesting piece about a young girl's experiences raising "bum" lambs.

Michael J. Yochim tells about the controversial decisions to allow snowmobiles into the tranquil winter wonderland of Yellowstone. The story demonstrates how decision-makers in government often must straddle competing interests.

The story told by Adam Lederer in "Project Wagon Wheel" has a much different evolution and result. There, a government agency allied with a major corporation tried to test unproven (perhaps dangerous) technology in a lightly-populated area. The people of Sublette County, with help from elected officials, managed to thwart the Atomic Energy Commission and a major natural gas producer.

A third article about technology (independently-refereed, I must add) is a history I began several years ago about establishing public television in Wyoming and the efforts of two people, in particular, to make it happen. Neither long-time University of Wyoming President George "Duke" Humphrey nor former Natrona County educator and superintendent Maurice Griffith, succeeded in the goal. Might it have been because of the "50-year lag," as Griffith called it?

Our usual book review section, ably edited by Carl Hallberg, contains reviews of several recent books about Western history.

Annals still seeks submissions for the "Wyoming Memories" feature. This feature is an opportunity for readers to gain firsthand information about the history of the state that can come only from the memory of the person who was there. Previous "Wyoming Memories" have included accounts of the grasshopper scourge in northeastern Wyoming in the 1930s, the "blizzard of 1949," and oral history accounts of Wyoming pioneers.

Write us.



Phil Roberts, Editor

Bum Lambs Aren't Really Bum!

Memories of the Orphan Lamb Business

By Alice Eder Jacobson

To be a homesteader in northern Wyoming in the 1910s into the 1920s was reasonably profitable. My father, Ernest Eder, settled on his homestead in 1914. With my mother's homestead and their additional, they had several square miles of property south of Buffalo. As late as 1929 paying crops could be obtained from corn, wheat and rye. By the 1930s the never-rich soil and a few years of drought made many homestead farmers switch to growing livestock. In 1922 we had seven sheep; by 1936 we had 945; in 1944, 1,300.

My brothers, Willard and Herbert, who were older, were put to work doing farm chores and herding sheep. My sister, Jean, and I were introduced to the business of raising bum lambs.

The Eder ranch didn't have very many orphan lambs because each ewe was isolated in a holding pen after the

lamb was born and the ewe and lamb were branded with the same number. Occasionally a set of twins needed to be separated because the mother didn't have enough milk for two lambs. If another ewe had a dead lamb, one of the twins was "jacketed" and given to the ewe. To jacket a lamb, the dead lamb was skinned and its soft hide put on the 'extra' twin. The mother, smelling her deceased offspring, would usually claim the jacketed twin. After a few days the jacket was removed.

When all efforts to find a mother for a lamb failed, the orphan was taken from the herd. Our mother was the usual one to take the lamb, place it on the oven door in the kitchen, rub it until it was warm, then bottle feed it. Jean and I gradually took over this task. I imagine I was eight or nine when my job as milkwarmer-bottle feeder became a morning/night/weekend job. Mother was still feeding the orphan lambs during mid-day when we were in school.

At first we kept the lambs in the coal house, maybe for convenience, as this was the closest building to the house. Two or three lambs were all right there. As our "herd" grew we had to move them to the brooder house (half of the building was used to house young turkeys).

At first, Jean and I were content with three or four bum lambs. After we gained experience we looked for a bigger "herd." About a mile away was a sheep trail used for moving sheep from the Arvada area to the Big Horn Mountains and their summer pasture. What happened to a little lamb that couldn't keep up with the herd on this 70-mile hike? If the herder was walking he couldn't carry the lamb all day. If the lamb's mother abandoned it so she could keep up with the herd, the lamb was as good



Alice and bum lambs



(Top, left): Alice, her sister Jean and their friend, Eileen Eades, with part of their "herd." (Photos, below): "Herding scenes" All photos from the author's collection.



as dead. Many orphan lambs learned at an early age that they could steal milk from a ewe by coming up behind her and grabbing a tit before she kicked or butted it away. This wasn't a very reliable source of milk and the lamb often grew weaker.

In late May and June, Jean and I would get on a horse, or borrow the truck if it was available, and go to the overnight stopping place on the sheep trail—the Nine Mile Water Hole. We would ask the herder if he had any orphan lambs. This was interesting because about half the herders were from Basque country and could barely speak English. One thing all herders were—concerned about helping each and every ewe and lamb in their care. If a bum lamb was available, he gave it to us.

Sometimes a herder would say he had left a lamb on the trail and we would back-track until we found the poor abandoned lamb—or sadly, its body.

After a few years the herders made every effort to get the bum lambs as far as the Nine Mile Water Hole. One year, on a cold, rainy evening, a herder gave us seven lambs. What a windfall!

Of course, we named each lamb. (Sheep don't all look alike and they have different personalities.) I remember Maude. She was larger and older than most bums. She had an injured hip and couldn't keep up with the trailing herd. Maude was selfish and bossy. She was leader of our bums that year. Maude got to the bottles of warm milk quickest and butted others out of the way. She was a survivor.

To feed the lambs we warmed cow's milk on the kitchen stove, then with funnel, bottles (beer bottles were a handy size and the nipples fit well on them), nipples and a pail of warm milk, we went to the lambs. When being fed, the baby lamb butted the bottle just as if it was sucking from its mother.

When the lambs were several weeks old, we taught them to drink from a pan instead of the bottle. Straddling the lamb, we had it suck on a finger, then pushed its head and our hand into a pan of milk. Usually, the lamb continued to suck our finger and would gulp up the milk. We gradually removed our finger. Just like children, some were slow learners and some learned after one lesson.

Feeding lambs from a pan was a lot faster than the bottle method.

I don't think Jean was ever so wrapped up in the bum lamb business like I was. (She was a good cook and played the piano well). But where was I? Outdoors leading our lambs to water or to better pasture. I was the one that went out to find them at feeding time, calling them by name. "Here Blackie, here Swift Runner, come Hard Drinker, here Maude." Our best year we had twenty-seven bums. That was a pretty good herd!

Mother's sister from South Dakota visited us one summer. She was fascinated with my running all over the ranch with my loyal lambs following me. When she returned to South Dakota, she sent a picture she had taken and enclosed this poem she had written:

ALICE

Alice was queen of the rancho
They, her devoted band
Where she led them, they gaily followed
Over foothills or prairie land.
And each one she called by his surname
And though each was no less than a bum
They showered her with their affection
When she spoke they hastened to come.

But don't get me wrong about Alice
She wasn't a gun moll, you know,
Though she packed a gun t'was for coyotes
Or perhaps an occasional crow,
And the bums that she ruled were wee lambies
That had to be bottled to grow.

-Mildred McKibben Cavanaugh

While we were in the bum lamb business, we had a favorable agreement with our dad. We got the milk, nipples and pasture free. At the end of the summer at lamb-shipping time, our bums were shipped along with the much fatter mother-nurtured lambs. Jean and I were given the average weight and price of the herd. Most of the bum lambs looked pretty scrawny when they mixed with the herd. We didn't see the profits of our bum lamb business, except on paper. The amount of our lamb sales was "put on the books" and saved for a college fund. In 1939, I received \$207.70; in 1940, \$305.72.

During the last few years when I raised bum lambs we learned to put a food supplement in the milk. This made them gain a little more weight but bum lambs were never as roly-poly fat as mother-fed lambs.

I don't know how sheep ranchers handle bum lambs today, but to me back in the 1930s, each lamb was an adorable pet.



Alice and lambs. Author's collection.

Alice Eder Jacobson grew up on a ranch six miles south of Buffalo, Wyoming. She taught school for thirty-four years in Michigan, Wyoming and Arizona. She raised five children, including Patty Myers, 1997-93 President of the Wyoming State Historical Society. Alice is retired and lives in Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

If you have a "Wyoming memory" you'd like to share with Annals readers, send it to Phil Roberts, Editor, Annals of Wyoming, Department of History, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY 82071.

SNOWPLANES, SNOWCOACHES AND SNOWMOBILES:



THE DECISION TO ALLOW SNOWMOBILES INTO YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

by

Michael J. Yochim

Ski trail, made by NPS rangers, near Yellowstone Lake,
1969. NPS, Yellowstone National Park collection

When World War II ended, the United States settled into what future historians may recognize as America's "golden age." Jobs were plentiful and wages were good, so Americans enjoyed an unprecedented standard of living. More and more Americans owned cars and had the financial means and free time to travel. Consequently, visitation in the national parks such as Yellowstone increased.

Helping to stimulate tourism in winter was the return to America of the 10th Mountain Division, the Army's very successful and prestigious division of skiing troops. Upon returning, several of the 10th Mountain Division members founded the country's first ski resorts, such as Alta in Utah and Sun Valley in Idaho. By founding these resorts, the Division members stimulated the interest of Americans in skiing and in winter recreation. Likewise, the Winter Olympic Games after the war interested Americans in winter vacations.¹

Thanks to these larger societal trends, visitation to Yellowstone greatly increased following World War II. Visitation exploded from its pre-war annual high of 526,437 visitors in 1940 to 814,907 in 1946 and more than one million visitors by 1948. Visitation continued to increase in the 1950s and 1960s, crossing the two-million visitor mark for the first time in 1965.

With increasing numbers of visitors passing through the communities just outside Yellowstone, merchants in those towns urged Yellowstone administrators to open the park year-round. While the merchants envisioned being able to drive one's automobile through Yellowstone year-round, the resulting policy allowed snowmobiles into the park in winter.

Surprisingly little is known about the details of this part of Yellowstone's history. Why did the Park's administrators allow snowmobiles into Yellowstone? Who were the primary actors? When did this occur, and when did motorized winter use begin in Yellowstone?

The first pressure on Yellowstone's administrators to plow the Park's roads actually occurred prior to World War II. Local merchants were beginning to see the benefits of increased tourism to their financial returns. It did not require too much imagination to realize that, if Yellowstone kept its roads open all year, the merchants could see year-round returns. For this reason, in 1940, Senator Joseph O'Mahoney (D-WY) pressed the National Park Service to open Yellowstone's roads in winter. O'Mahoney urged the NPS to consider plowing.²

Arno Cammerer, Director of the NPS, denied O'Mahoney's request, stating the NPS's reasons against plowing:

Severe cold, sudden storms and the rapid changes in temperature make the Park dangerous in winter;

Drifting snow would make the roads treacherous; and

It would require excessive outlays for equipment and manpower to keep these roads safe for travel.³

Between Cammerer's response and the advent of the World War, pressure to open Yellowstone's roads disappeared for the next seven years, resurfacing with the increased visitation after the war. This time, the Big Horn Basin Clubs, a federation of all commercial clubs of the Park region in Wyoming, called upon the National Park Service (NPS) to consider plowing its roads in winter.⁴ Responding to the request, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (now Federal Highways), in conjunction with the NPS, conducted a study to determine if opening the roads in winter was feasible. The Bureau concluded that opening the Park's roads in winter was not feasible, and cited the following reasons:

The standards of many of the existing highways were rather low, and not well-suited to plowing; The buildings in the Park's interior were not winterized; and Plowing would be too hazardous.⁵

To arrive at its conclusion, the Bureau derived estimates of the cost of acquiring the necessary plowing equipment and of regularly plowing, estimates that the Big Horn Basin Club criticized as "padded." In fact, contractor V. F. Haberthier of Cody offered to sign a five-year contract with Yellowstone administrators to plow the Park's roads for less than half of their cost estimate. The club requested a formal investigation to determine if the Bureau's objections to winter travel were valid.⁶

The government never did such an investigation, and Yellowstone's administrators stuck to the over-all conclusion reached by the Bureau: "the proposal to attempt winter snow removal on the Yellowstone Park Highway

¹ James Jurale, "History of Winter Use in Yellowstone National Park," (Master's thesis submitted to the University of Wyoming, Dec., 1986), 102-112.

² Arno Cammerer, to Joseph O'Mahoney, Feb. 8, 1940, Box L-46, File "868 Winter Sports," Yellowstone National Park Archives, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, (henceforth YNP Archives).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Seek Year-Round Opening of Yellowstone Hiways," Cody *Enterprise*, Cody, Wyoming, March 17, 1948.

⁵ Lemuel Garrison, to Regional Director, Oct. 11, 1957, 1N Box D-24, File D30, Book #2: "Snow Removal, July 1957 through March, 1958," Regional Archive Depository of the National Archives, Kansas City, Missouri.

⁶ "Yellowstone Plan Gains; contractor Backs Year-Round Idea," Denver *Post*, March 12, 1949, and "Charge Park Service Costs Padded," Cody *Enterprise*, March 16, 1949.

System ... is economically unsound."⁷ Thus ended consideration of plowing the roads of Yellowstone for eight more years.

Meanwhile, with much free time in the long winter of the Northern Rockies, local entrepreneurs tinkered with some spare vehicle parts and developed the first vehicles capable of traveling over snow-covered roads, the "snowplanes." A snowplane was a noisy contraption. It had a cab, in which two people could ride, set on three skis (only one in front, for steering), with a large propeller mounted on the rear. Akin to an airboat used in the Everglades, the snowplanes "blew" around on snow-covered roads without taking off.⁸

The first definitely known use of such a machine in Yellowstone was in 1942, by Glenn Simmons of the Reclamation Service, who traveled from the South Entrance to Old Faithful and to West Yellowstone. National Park Service rangers made the next recorded trip in 1943 from the South Entrance, with an eye toward purchasing one of the machines for government use.⁹ By the late 1940s the NPS had purchased two snowplanes,¹⁰ and had begun using them for winter patrols in the Park interior. On one such mission in 1946, Ranger Bob Murphy discovered a large group of bison that had broken through the ice of the Yellowstone River just north of Yellowstone Lake. Already dead and frozen when he found them on February 14, Murphy and his coworkers had no choice but to leave the carcasses in the river for the winter, dragging them out in spring for a mass burial. At that time they counted a total of 39 carcasses.¹¹

Yellowstone's administrators escorted two parties of photographers into the Park via snowplane to photograph the snowbound Old Faithful area in February 1947.¹² Tourism possibilities became obvious. In December, the Jackson area snowplane owners discussed with Grand Teton National Park Superintendent John McLaughlin (who became Yellowstone's next superintendent) the possibility of making regularly scheduled trips by snowplanes into the Old Faithful area. They pointed out that visitors could experience the Park in winter. Because it was not his decision to make, McLaughlin demurred. He wrote Yellowstone administrators to give them a "heads up" on the matter. McLaughlin wrote that Yellowstone should deny them permission, because the group hoped to use some government buildings for overnight accommodations. He also advised Yellowstone's administrators that the snowplane owners would not readily accept "no" for an answer.¹³

⁷ Conrad Wirth to Milward Simpson, March 12, 1957 IN Box D-24, File D30, Book #1: "Snow Removal Oct. 1952 through June 1957," Regional Archive Depository of the National Archives, Kansas City, MO.

⁸ Walt Stuart, "Interview with Walt Stuart by Leslie Quinn, 1994," November, 1994, Drawer 8, Tape #96-8, Yellowstone National Park Research Library, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, (henceforth YNP Research Library).

⁹ Bob Murphy, "Snoplans and Frozen Buffalo," Report in the Vertical Files, YNP Research Library, 1994, p. 1.

¹⁰ Roger J. Siglin to Brenda Black, Nov. 15, 1977, Box L-35, File L: "Land and Water Use 75, 76, 77," YNP Archives.

¹¹ Bob Murphy, "Snoplans and Frozen Buffalo" (Unpublished paper in the Vertical Files, YNP Research Library), 4.

¹² Superintendent's Monthly Report for February, 1947, 2, YNP Research Library.

¹³ John S. McLaughlin to Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, Dec. 17, 1947, Box A-247, File 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives.



Snowplanes were the first oversnow motorized vehicles used in Yellowstone. Shown is a snowplane in the Norris Geyser area in February, 1943. Note the small wheels for steering across the bare areas, where the lack of snow made steering impossible.

The possibility of such regularly scheduled trips touched off a minor panic in Yellowstone, as evidenced by the flurry of letters following the arrival in Yellowstone of McLaughlin's letter. First, Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone Fred Johnston wrote Lawrence Merriam, the regional director, requesting advice in the matter, "since we believe the problem to be of a policy nature requiring a decision by higher authority than can be given by us." However, he added that "under present conditions, i.e., extreme isolation of this section of the Park in winter, we do not feel that the type of use ... is desirable" because the numerous dangers involved made such an undertaking very risky.¹⁴ Merriam responded six days later that "it seems to us that no permit should be issued [for regularly scheduled trips, but] we are hardly in a position to prevent individual trips by snow plane into the Park" (emphasis added). If such individual trips materialized, Merriam suggested having travelers register with the rangers at the South Entrance. The rangers could inform them of the risks they were taking.¹⁵ Johnston formally adopted Merriam's policy just three days later.¹⁶

It seems odd that Regional Director Merriam and Acting Superintendent Johnston felt helpless to prevent such individual trips into the Park, since Johnston and Superintendent Edmund Rogers exercised full authority over the Park in all other matters. For example, in the next two years, Johnston or Rogers denied permission to five different parties to take extended ski trips into the Park, and also would not allow automobiles on the snow-covered roads in the interior of Yellowstone.¹⁷ For whatever reason, though, Rogers, Johnston and Merriam felt powerless to control individual motorized trips.

It seems additionally odd that Rogers and Johnston permitted such motorized use, given the recognition by Superintendent Rogers in 1948—before such use had begun—that "the passage of several snowmobiles over the roads would pack the snow so that later freezing would leave a very hard layer of ice which would seriously impede the progress of our plows when they open the road. This would add materially to the cost of our snow removal operations."¹⁸ While they recognized this problem with snowmachine use on its roads, they did not do anything to prevent the problem.

The first "purely pleasure" trips by snowplanes occurred two years later, from January to March 1949. A total of 35 people traveling in 19 snowplanes made the trip to Old Faithful or West Thumb from West Yellowstone. Snowplane trips from West Yellowstone probably began earlier than those from the South because visitors traveling from West had thirty fewer miles to travel to Old Faithful—one way—than visitors entering from the south.

Table 1. Winter Visitation to Yellowstone National Park, 1948-57.²²

	Number of Snowmachines	Visitors on Snowmachines	Total Visitation, Dec.-March of each winter
1948-49	>32	>61	3888
1949-50	77	162	8077
1950-51	3 (mild winter)	8	8180
1951-52	35	>56	8198
1952-53	?	>59	3314
1953-54	>9	171	4913
1954-55	>100	631	4995
1955-56	138	580	3242
1956-57	>76	533	3223

Note: Total visitation includes visitors entering the North Entrance by car.

The Superintendent of the Park reported that "it appears that this mode of travel is becoming more popular."¹⁹

Indeed it was. Motorized visitation to Yellowstone in winter occurred regularly throughout the 1950s. (*See above table*). The surge in visitation in the winter of 1954-55, reflected the fact that two West Yellowstone entrepreneurs used a snowcoach for winter tours of the Park that winter. A snowcoach, manufactured by Bombardier of Quebec, Canada, was a van-sized vehicle capable of carrying up to 12 people in its heated interior. In 1952, Harold Young and Bill Nicholls, the two West Yellowstone motel operators, realized that the winter wonderland of Yellowstone could be a "good tourist gimmick." The two men applied to the NPS to obtain a permit to lead charter snowcoach trips into the Park. Yellowstone's administrators refused permission for three years, mainly out of safety concerns, worried that the snowcoaches would become stuck. They finally relented in January 1955, as long as Young and Nicholls would

¹⁴ Fred Johnston to Regional Director, Dec. 24, 1947, Box A-247, File 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives.

¹⁵ Lawrence Merriam to Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, Dec. 30, 1947, Box A-247, File 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives.

¹⁶ Fred Johnston to Chief Ranger LaNoue, Jan. 2, 1948, Box A-247, file 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives. I am the first to record the information regarding these events in 1947, because Box A-247 was previously unavailable to Yellowstone researchers.

¹⁷ Edmund Rogers (Superintendent), OR Fred Johnston (Acting Superintendent) to the following: Jim Sykes, Feb. 17, 1949; C.W. Egbert, Dec. 22, 1949; Carroll Wheeler, Nov. 28, 1950; Herbert Richert, Dec. 12, 1950; and Henry Buchtel, March 30, 1951; all in Box A-247, File 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives.

¹⁸ Edmund Rogers to Caroline Madden, March 11, 1948, Box A-247, File 857-10: "Winter Visitors to Park Interior," YNP Archives.

¹⁹ *Superintendent's Monthly Report, January 1949*, 5, YNP Research Library.



Highway maintenance supervisor Charlie Shumate of Colorado at West Thumb Geyser Basin, 1957. The propeller is in motion at the rear (left).

NPS, Yellowstone National Park

not advertise their service.²⁰ The reason for the secrecy is unclear, but was probably intended to keep many tourists from making the risky trip into the snow-covered, remote and unguarded Yellowstone interior. Young and Nicholls began their snowcoach tours that winter, and continued to operate such tours for ten years, finally relinquishing their permit to operate to the Yellowstone Park Company in 1966.²¹

By 1957 the problem that Superintendent Rogers foresaw—that snowmachines would compact the snow, making plowing more difficult in spring—was becoming apparent. However, Yellowstone's administrators found a way to plow the roads despite the compacted snow and ice: "By using a combination of the V-plow and graders with ice blades and discs, it was possible" to get the roads open by their normal opening dates.²² Additionally, the snowmachines damaged the road surface in thermally warmed areas—areas unique to Yellowstone in which the ground or road itself is warm, and consequently bare in winter. By the early 1970's, Park administrators discovered that wood chips laid on the road in such thermally-warmed areas would both protect the road and also enable snowmachines to travel across such bare areas. They still use wood chips in this manner.

Yellowstone administrators had received pressure to open the Park roads to automobiles. Instead, they opened the Park to snowplanes and snowcoaches.

In 1956, the National Park Service launched the "MISSION 66"²³ program, which unwittingly began the second round of pressure to plow Yellowstone's roads. Recognizing that the post-war prosperity and increasing urbanization of America were bringing more visitors to the

National Park System than the system was able to handle, the NPS directors created MISSION 66, an ambitious ten-year program to "develop and staff these priceless possessions of the American people [so] as to permit their wisest possible use: maximum enjoyment for those who use them." Construction of visitor facilities was to be an important part of the program: "Modern roads, well planned trails, utilities, camp and picnic grounds, and many kinds of structures needed for public use or administration, to meet the requirements of an expected 80 million [nationwide] visitors in 1966, are necessary.

"Outmoded and inadequate facilities will be replaced with physical improvements adequate for expected demands."²⁴ The Secretary of the Interior wrote the President that "MISSION 66 covers all the anticipated needs of the Parks [and] plots a comprehensive and well-balanced schedule of improvement."²⁵

²⁰ Robert S. Halliday, "Yellowstone in Winter," *Parade*, March 13, 1955, 11.

²¹ *Superintendent's Monthly Report for December, 1966*, 2, YNP Research Library.

²² Compiled from the Superintendent's Monthly Reports from 1948 to 1957, YNP Research Library.

²³ *Superintendent's Monthly Report for April, 1957*, 10, YNP Research Library.

²⁴ "MISSION 66" was almost always capitalized, as indicated, in the literature of the time.

²⁵ "What is Mission 66?," pamphlet (no page number given), Box W-141, File A98: "Conservation and Presentation of Areas for Public Enjoyment: Mission 66," YNP Archives.

²⁶ Douglas McLay to The President, Feb. 1, 1956, Box YPC-91, File "NPS-1956 General Correspondence," YNP Archives.

This program of development affected virtually all national park system sites, and focused on the larger parks such as Yellowstone. In Yellowstone the efforts were on road improvements, housing improvements, and the construction of Canyon Village, with a modern-looking lodge surrounded by 500 cabins available for overnight guests.²⁷

In addition to its development program, MISSION 66 recognized another way to provide for increased numbers of visitors: extending the length of the Park's tourist season. Initially MISSION 66 only encouraged a longer summer season—from May to October, rather than June to September.²⁸ Park planners recognized that opening the Park in winter would provide another means to provide for increased numbers of visitors. Consequently, in the MISSION 66 Report for Yellowstone, park planners stated that "oversnow use has already been introduced ... and today's thinking includes the encouragement of this type of use in preference to [the plowed] opening of the roads."²⁹ The MISSION 66 proposal encouraged winter use, allowing more people to visit Yellowstone and also take some pressure off the Park during the summer. Additionally, MISSION 66 preferred oversnow use rather than plowing the roads, pushing the Park to continue allowing snowmachines rather than plowing.

In apparent adherence to the directive of MISSION 66, Conrad Wirth, the National Park Service Director in 1957, issued a "Memorandum to all Field Offices and the Washington Office," stating:

It is recognized that important recreational benefits are available during the winter months in the Parks of the NPS having a heavy fall of snow. ... It is further recognized that the use of such parks for healthful, out-of-door recreation during the winter months is a very desirable way to make scenic and other natural values of the System available for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

It is, therefore, the policy of the National Park Service to encourage winter use programs. The objective will be the maximum benefits possible to the largest number of people.³⁰

Wirth believed that closing the roads in winter was "not taking full advantage of the investment" the NPS had in them. Opening the roads would more fully utilize that investment.³¹

The Director may have been responding to the same pressure Yellowstone officials were feeling. Lemuel Garrison, Yellowstone's Superintendent, wrote that "because of the pressure which has been put on the NPS and the Park to get the roads open earlier in the spring, ... we are advancing the snow plowing operations [for spring, 1957]."³² The "Highway 89" Association—a group of businesses located along U.S. Highway 89, which passes

through Yellowstone—was the source; they not only desired an earlier spring opening of Yellowstone's roads, but also wished to see U.S. 89 plowed all winter from Livingston to Jackson, through Yellowstone.³³ Also joining the fray was the Wyoming Highway Commission and Wyoming Governor Milward Simpson, who also urged Yellowstone's administrators to keep the Park's roads open all winter.³⁴

The pressure worked. Senator O'Mahoney took action again, stating that the NPS "would make another survey soon to decide whether it was feasible to keep the Yellowstone roads open all winter."³⁵ By July, Yellowstone's administrators had formed a committee to study the matter. On the committee were representatives of the National Park Service; Colorado, California and regional highway departments; the Bureau of Public Roads; the American Automobile Association; and Yellowstone Park Company personnel. The NPS stated that "Eight years have elapsed since the Bureau of Public Roads' study of 1949, and in the interim improvements in snow removal equipment and methods have been such as to indicate the need of evaluating their applicability to Yellowstone." The group toured Yellowstone's road system, both that summer and the following winter, discussing at length the feasibility of opening Yellowstone's roads in winter.³⁶ They examined all aspects of winter in Yellowstone, including the climate, topography, safety factors, travel trends, road conditions, and costs.³⁷

²⁷ USDI-NPS (author), "MISSION 66 for Yellowstone National Park," 5. Vertical Files, File "MISSION 66," YNP Research Library.

²⁸ W.G. Carnes: "A Look Back to Look Ahead," talk given at the MISSION 66 Frontiers Conference, April 24, 1961, Box YPC-91, File "NPS—1956—General Correspondence," YNP Archives.

²⁹ Yellowstone National Park, NPS, USDI, "MISSION 66: A Look Ahead," 73. Box D-20, Folder 4: "1956: Final MISSION 66 Report for Yellowstone," YNP Archives.

³⁰ Conrad Wirth to Washington Office and All Field Offices, Jan. 25, 1957, Box YPC-91, File "NPS-1957," YNP Archives.

³¹ "Summary Minutes, 37th Meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Buildings and Monuments," October 7-10, 1957, 21, Box A-238, File A1619: "Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Buildings and Monuments, 1957," YNP Archives.

³² Lemuel Garrison to Huntley Child, Feb. 25, 1957, Box YPC-91, File "NPS-1957," YNP Archives.

³³ HC, Jr. [Huntley Child, Jr.] to JQN [John Q. Nichols], Feb. 27, 1957, Box YPC-91, File "NPS-1957," YNP Archives.

³⁴ "Wyoming Urges All Entrances to Park Open Simultaneously," *Great Falls Tribune*, March 12, 1957.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Warren Hamilton to John Q. Nichols, July 9, 1957, Box YPC-91, File "National Park Service—1957," YNP Archives.

³⁷ NPS, USDI, "Information for the Snow Survey Committee Concerning Possibilities of Keeping Park Open for General Public Use the Year Round," Box D-42, File "Snow Removal (Roads), 1932-1959," YNP Archives.



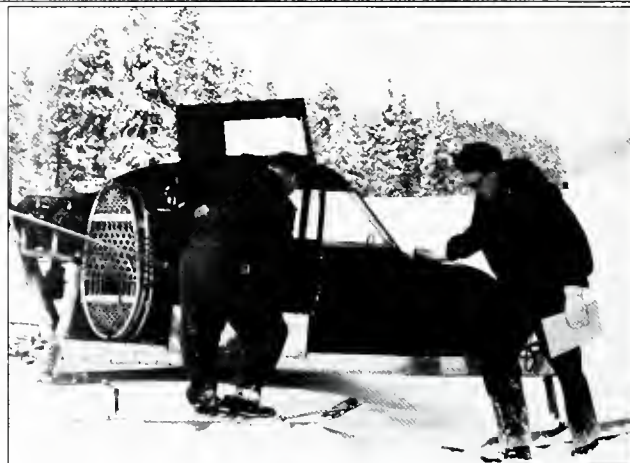
The Snow Survey Committee (1958) used a variety of early oversnow vehicles to travel Yellowstone's interior road system in winter. The photo (left) shows them stopped at Virginia Meadows, traveling in one "Sno-cat" and four Army weasels. At other times, they used snowplanes and Bombardier snowcoaches.

(Below)--The Snow Survey Committee poses for a photograph at Old Faithful, with an overwintering mule deer watching. The snow at the Old Faithful elevation is typically too deep for mule deer, but the thermally warmed bare areas compensate, enabling a few deer to survive in that harsh climate.



***National Park Service,
Yellowstone National Park photographs***

Lemuel Garrison (right) was superintendent of Yellowstone in the 1950s, during the second round of pressure to plow Yellowstone's roads. The photo of Garrison, a NPS employee and snowplane was made in 1957.



The following spring, the group made its recommendation: year round operation "is deemed feasible but not practical." The committee cited as reasons Yellowstone's poor road standards, the extremely low projections of winter traffic use, Yellowstone's remote location, and its generally severe winter weather.³⁸ After all, conditions in Yellowstone's interior had not changed that much in eight years.

The committee's report settled the matter for another seven years—at least, no record of any significant pressure on the NPS appears until 1964. In the meantime, MISSION 66's encouragement of oversnow vehicle visitation had an effect, as more and more winter visitors vacationed in the Park. Visitation in the Park via snowcoach from West Yellowstone steadily increased from 1957 to 1966, (as Table 2 below illustrates); by the 1963-64 season more than 1,000 visitors had taken such a tour.

In January 1963, Yellowstone's administrators permitted the first private snowmobiles—three Polaris Snow Travelers—to enter the Park.⁴⁰ One year later, Acting Superintendent Luis Gastelum noted that "six Polaris Snow Travelers with 14 people visited the Old Faithful area. Polaris is a toboggan with tracks and [is] motor driven—[a] powered oversnow sled—which many people are buying."⁴¹

These sleds were the first snowmobiles allowed to enter Yellowstone. Their operators registered just as the snowcoach operators did—by stopping at the self-registration station at the West Entrance, which was not staffed in winter.⁴² Hence, the Park administrators lumped these smaller machines in with the larger snowcoaches, essentially considering them to be the winter equivalent of the automobile.

Table 2.
Winter Visitation to Yellowstone NP, 1957-67.³⁹

YEAR	Trips*	Visitors on snowmachine	Total Visitation, Dec.-March
1957-58	?	>85	2442
1958-59	>34	>345	2679
1959-60	>7	>265	2552
1960-61	77	508	4363
1961-62	52	>85	4268
1962-63	?	>98	2999
1963-64	>70	1067	5571
1964-65	?100	1326	6382
1965-66	400	2662	9741
1966-67	1893	5218	12431

*may include more than one snowmachine

Visitation was increasing on other fronts as well, perhaps because park administrators encouraged it. For example, in the 1964 Yellowstone Master Plan they stated: "Winter Use of the Park should be encouraged by extending the operation of oversnow equipment from the West Entrance and soliciting additional operators from [the] other entrances."⁴³

In the Monthly Report for November, 1964, Superintendent McLaughlin wrote that snowcoach operator Harold Young "has made arrangements with the Northern Pacific Railway company to have two tours a week out of Chicago." Groups of visitors traveled from Chicago to Yellowstone via rail, and then took Young's snowcoaches into the Park for a tour.⁴⁴ Young's agreement with the Northern Pacific illustrated that the winter tourism possibilities were becoming realities.

Later that winter, NBC television filmed "Winter Comes to Yellowstone," part of the *Wild Kingdom* series narrated by Marlin Perkins of the St. Louis Zoo. *Wild Kingdom* was a popular wildlife show of the time, viewed by an average of 17 million viewers weekly.⁴⁵ "Winter Comes to Yellowstone" featured comparisons of various features as seen in summer and in winter, and the activities of winter rangers.⁴⁶ Aired on March 14, 1965, it probably contributed to the dramatic increase in visitation in Yellowstone the next year (see Table 2).

A snowmobile demonstration that occurred in March 1965, certainly contributed to the increase in winter visitation as well. Monte Wight, a snowmobile dealer of Pinedale, Wyoming, requested and received permission to take 27 Ski-Doos—a brand of snowmobile—on a two-day trip through the Park. Wight and his companions traveled from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful the first day. With no overnight accommodations open at Old Faithful

³⁸ NPS, USDI, "Report of the Snow Survey Committee, Yellowstone National Park, May 1958," 5-6. Box A-165, File A4055: "Conferences and Meetings-1969: Tri-State Comm. And Master Planners," YNP Archives.

³⁹ Compiled from Superintendent's Monthly Reports, 1957-67, YNP Research Library.

⁴⁰ Superintendent's Monthly Report for January, 1963, 2. YNP Research Library.

⁴¹ Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for January 1964, 1. YNP Research Library.

⁴² Superintendent's Monthly Report for March, 1967, 2, and photographs following p. 9.

⁴³ NPS, *Yellowstone Master Plan Final Draft*, April 1964, 100, Box D-67, YNP Archives.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁵ Superintendent's Monthly Report for January, 1965, 3. YNP Research Library.

⁴⁶ Staff Meeting Minutes for November 19, 1964, Box A-152, File A40: "Conferences and Meetings, Yellowstone Staff Meetings, 1964," 4. YNP Archives.



National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park

Harold Young and Bill Nichols of West Yellowstone operated the "Snowmobiles of West Yellowstone" from 1955-1966. Prior the development of the modern snowmobile, these Bombardier Snowcoaches were known as snowmobiles. Evidently, Young and Nichols used creativity in decorating their vehicles.

at that time, Wight's party returned via snowcoach to West Yellowstone to spend the night, leaving their snowmobiles at Old Faithful. Returning to Old Faithful via snowcoach the next day, the members fired up their machines and continued on to Moran (south of the south entrance) that evening.⁴⁷ In so doing, Wight demonstrated to all the touring possibilities of snowmobiles.

Superintendent McLaughlin's remarks concerning the trip again indicate the encouragement park administrators gave to oversnow visitation. He wrote in his 1965 Annual Report:

It seems inevitable [that] mechanized over-the-snow travel may replace skis and snowshoes. ...Undoubtedly more Park travel during the winter months by this type of machine can be expected and should be encouraged. This type of recreation is increasing rapidly in this particular section of the country and its influence has spread to Yellowstone National Park. The machines are now relatively inexpensive and maintenance requirements simple. Much of the terrain of the Park and its features are compatible and attractive to this mode of winter travel.⁴⁸

McLaughlin was correct in his prediction. The popularity of the snowmobile exploded. He soon was scrambling for regulations to control the activities of snow machine-riding visitors in the Park. He wrote the Regional Director of the NPS requesting that the same laws that summer vehicle operators followed be applied to the snowmobile operators. McLaughlin asked the Regional Director if "other Service areas are experiencing this type of winter use and associated problems of control."⁴⁹ It is unclear whether the Regional Director responded.

At this time, snowmobiles were largely a novelty, having been only recently developed. Snowmobiles were considerably less expensive than the larger snowcoaches—hence, more affordable to the individual. Such conveyances were attractive to area residents who had longed for years to access the interior of Yellowstone. If Yellowstone would not plow its roads, then with such machines, the residents could travel into the snowbound park. Besides, the NPS encouraged such travel. Moreover, area residents could rent the unusual machines to winter tourists—and profit by doing so.

Was McLaughlin justified in promoting such machines? Probably. After all, the Director of the NPS, Conrad Wirth, had, just seven years earlier, made it the policy of the NPS to encourage winter use. When Wirth issued his policy, he had no idea such machines would become available in a few years. Hence, McLaughlin may have felt he was adhering to Wirth's directive. More importantly, here at last was a way to make Yellowstone's spectacular interior accessible to the world in winter.

Pressure to open the Park's roads to automobiles resurfaced in 1964. Congressmen from the surrounding states reignited the debate in January, 1964, by inquiring again into the year-round opening of the Park's roads; again, their motive was to boost the sluggish winter economy in their respective states.⁵⁰ Representatives of Livingston, Cody, and Cooke City arranged a meeting between local and Yellowstone officials in Livingston the following month to discuss the feasibility of opening the roads in winter. This meeting's outcome was unclear. Nonetheless, following the meeting, the *Park County News* of Livingston sent a letter to

⁴⁷ Superintendent's Annual Report for 1964, 22-23. YNP Research Library.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

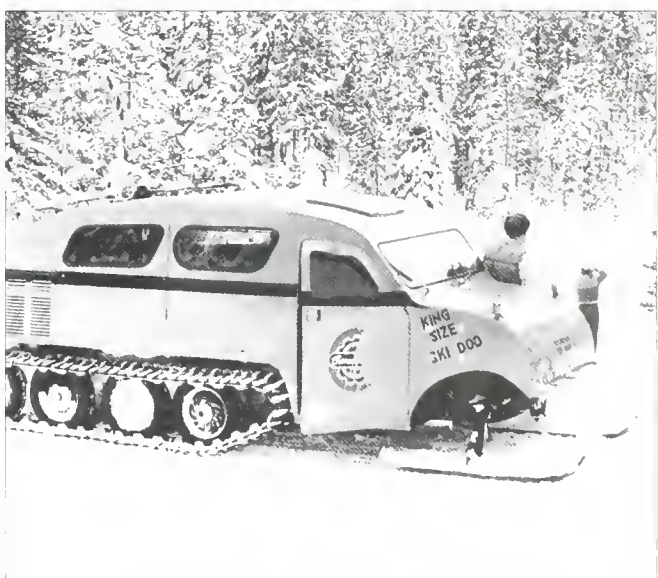
⁴⁹ John S. McLaughlin to Regional Director, Midwest Region, March 31, 1966, Box A-32, File A88: "Oversnow Vehicle Travel," YNP Archives.

⁵⁰ "Projected Costs (1964) for Winter Snow Operations," pamphlet, "Grooming/Winter Preparations Cost," *Snowmobile Briefing Book, Volume 1*, black binder in YNP Research Library, (no page number).

the Montana Congressional delegation, promoting the opening of the roads in Yellowstone.⁵¹ At the next staff meeting in Yellowstone, assistant superintendent Luis Gastellum, who attended the Livingston meeting, stated "In 1958 we issued a report stating we would be able to have winter travel in five or ten years, but we have not followed through on our development. ... Since winter travel is inevitable, the Service should begin planning for it now."⁵²

The Congressional inquiry and Gastellum's statement touched off a debate among park staff. Should the Park be open to snowmobiles at all? No mention was made of whether the Park's roads should be plowed. For the first time, the park staff had second thoughts about whether snowmobile visitation was appropriate to Yellowstone. In a staff meeting on January 28, 1966, park officials discussed the possible future use of oversnow vehicles and decided that they needed to formulate a policy by the next year.⁵³ Evidently, that decision caused staff members to think more seriously about such use. The topic came up again at the next meeting on February 25, 1966. According to the meeting minutes, "there was some discussion regarding closing down snowmobile operations and whether it would be advisable to stop travel through the Park by any type of oversnow vehicle."⁵⁴

Further complicating the debate was the radical proposal put forth in April, 1966, by the Yellowstone Park Company, the Park's chief concessionaire, to plow the road from Mammoth to Madison, operate snowcoaches from there to Old Faithful and West Yellowstone, and to



NPS, Yellowstone National Park

In 1966, the Yellowstone Park Company took over the Young-Nichols operation, buying their Bombardier snowcoaches. By 1968, "ski doos" were in use in the park--the first small private snowmobiles. Pictured is a "king-size ski doo."

open the "Old Faithful Motor Hotel" for winter visitation.⁵⁵ Superintendent McLaughlin decided that "the ramifications of these proposals need to be discussed pretty thoroughly prior to any preliminary approval on my part."⁵⁶ (Apparently, approval was not given because the Yellowstone Park Company (YPCo.) did not open any facility at Old Faithful until 1971).

At this point, the debate became public. Local congressmen again stepped into the action, holding a public meeting in Livingston about the opening of the Park's roads in winter. McLaughlin reported in the June Superintendent's Report:

there has been a considerable flurry of publicity on keeping the Yellowstone roads open year around. This matter was reviewed [last month] around Livingston and [has] spread quickly to other communities. Since close political contests are in prospect in all three surrounding states for various important offices, the time was ripe to reopen this perennial subject. Candidates and prospective candidates were almost unanimous in their support of local opinion in favor of keeping the Park open all year despite the high costs and doubtful feasibility of the proposal.⁵⁷

In response to the public pressure, Park officials embarked on round three of cost estimates, visitor use estimates, and statements of policy. But this time these governmental ramblings did not mollify the locals. Instead, pressure intensified, eventually drawing George Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service, into the fray. Hartzog formed the Tri-State Commission, a group of high-level National Park Service officials and regional representatives, to study the matter.⁵⁸ The group met five

⁵¹ "Why Not Open Park For Winter Activity For All The People?," *Park County News*, Livingston, Mont., Feb. 6, 1964.

⁵² Staff Meeting Minutes for February 13, 1964, Box A-152, File A40: "Conferences and Meetings—Yellowstone Staff Meetings, 1964," YNP Archives.

⁵³ Staff Meeting Minutes for January 28, 1966, Box A-172, File A40: "Yellowstone Staff Meeting Minutes 1966," YNP Archives.

⁵⁴ Staff Meeting Minutes for February 25, 1966, Box A-172, File A40: "Yellowstone Staff Meeting Minutes 1966," YNP Archives. This is the only evidence I found from this era indicating that the Park administrators expressed second thoughts about allowing snowmachines into the Park.

⁵⁵ Ronald Beaumont to John McLaughlin, April 5, 1966, Box C-4, File C-38: "Concessionaire Contracts and Permits," YNP Archives.

⁵⁶ John McLaughlin, to Art Bazata, April 12, 1966, Box C-4, File C-38: "Concessionaire Contracts and Permits," YNP Archives.

⁵⁷ *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report, June, 1966*, 19, YNP Research Library.

⁵⁸ George Hartzog to Tim Babcock, Governor of Montana, Aug. 19, 1966, Box A-165, File A4055: "Conferences and Meetings—1969: Tri-State Comm. And Master Planners," YNP Archives.

times in the next year, with the Wyoming delegates particularly agitating for year-round opening of the Park roads. Hartzog and the Park administrators recognized that most of Yellowstone's use was concentrated in the three summer months. Dispersing that summer visitation peak had not happened so far despite the longer summer season. They thought it would be nice if they could disperse it somehow, although they did not want to deprive the summer program of its already-deficient spending.⁵⁹

By March 1967, it was clear that the Tri-State Commission meetings were going to culminate in a congressional hearing on the "Winter Operations of Roads in Yellowstone National Park."⁶⁰ The hearing was held in Jackson, Wyoming on August 12, 1967, and was chaired by U.S. Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming. Director Hartzog began the hearing by stating the position of his bureau. The form of transportation in winter in Yellowstone should be that which is most appropriate to the Park and which improves the quality of park experience for the citizens. Oversnow visitation was, unless shown otherwise, the appropriate means of visiting the Park in the winter. Hartzog stated that it should be encouraged, since oversnow vehicles travel on top of the snow, not in a plowed trench such as automobiles would travel through.⁶¹

Hartzog's position was supported by the Izaak Walton League and the Lander Snow-drifters (an early snowmobiling group) for the same reasons. Over-snow vehicles offered the best means of viewing the Park's attractions. Hamilton Stores and the Yellowstone Park Company agreed with Hartzog, but for different reasons, mostly economic. It would cost too much for them to open facilities in the Park's interior in the winter, since their buildings were not winterized. Mary Back (a Wyoming conservationist) and the National Wildlife Federation also opposed the opening of the Park's roads. Such action would be too costly to American taxpayers for the small benefits they would receive.

The Wildlife Management Institute of Washington, D.C., was the only group to oppose the plowing of roads for environmental or wildlife reasons. This group argued that "winter is the extreme period of physiological stress for wildlife, and both the direct and indirect harassment of the animals by humans could be harmful."⁶²

In contrast, and as expected, nearly every Chamber of Commerce in Wyoming and the Yellowstone region supported the plowing of roads in winter. Chambers as far away as Salt Lake City, Utah, and Amarillo, Texas, (both on U.S. Highways that pass through Yellowstone) sent statements or representatives to support the plowing of

the Park's roads. Their motive was obvious: the stimulation of the then-slow winter economy. The West Yellowstone Chamber was the only one to hesitate in supporting the opening of park roads. Snowmobile and snowcoach income were already significant to town merchants. The chamber, however, changed its mind at the last minute and supported the opening of park roads.⁶³

Clearly, pressure to open the roads was intense and coming from all directions. Considering that, it is surprising that Yellowstone did not begin to plow the roads. But, Hartzog's mind was apparently made up before he began the meetings. After all, Yellowstone's administrators had maintained their position for at least the last ten years. By October 1967, he informed Yellowstone's administrators that there would be no additional opening of Yellowstone's roads in the winter, nor even a longer summer season (April-November, rather than May-October).⁶⁴ Rather, the Park would remain open to snowmobiles.

In the next four years, Yellowstone administrators created the snowmobile policy. It consisted of three main prongs: keeping Yellowstone's interior roads open to snowmobiles and snowcoaches, rather than automobiles; grooming those roads on a regular basis to make them comfortable for travel; and opening the Old Faithful Snowlodge for overnight use in winter.

Around the time of the congressional hearing, Jack Anderson arrived from Grand Teton National Park, where he was superintendent, to assume the superintendency of Yellowstone. Anderson adhered to Hartzog's position on the winter use of Yellowstone, as confirmed at an all-day meeting with all of his leading staff members on March 17 or 18, 1968.⁶⁵ This was the crucial meeting at which Yellowstone's administrators formalized their winter use policy.

⁵⁹ H.L. Bill to Director, Sept. 1, 1966, Box A-165, File A4055: "Conferences and Meetings—1969: Tri-State Comm. And Master Planners," YNP Archives.

⁶⁰ Staff Meeting Minutes for March 9, 1967, Box A-226, File A40: "Staff Meeting Minutes, 1967—Yellowstone," YNP Archives.

⁶¹ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, on Winter Operation of Roads in Yellowstone National Park*, Ninetieth Congress, Second Session, 1968, 6-9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Staff Meeting Minutes for Oct. 19, 1967, Box A-226, File A40, "Staff Meeting Minutes 1967—Yellowstone," YNP Archives.

⁶⁵ Date is March 17, 1968 in Robert Murphy to Chief, Division of Resources Management & Visitor Protection, March 28, 1968, and March 18, 1968 in "Winter Oversnow Vehicle Operations" Minutes, Box L-42, File L3427: "Recreation Activities 1969—Winter Sports (Oversnow Vehicle Use)," YNP Archives.

As he later wrote regarding their decision to permit snowmachines instead of automobiles, Anderson and his staff evaluated the three options: plowing the roads, closing the Park to all users except skiers and snowshoers, or developing an oversnow-visitation program.

Plowing the Park's roads, in the view of Anderson and his staff, would not enhance the Park visit because it would create three problems, all a result of creating snow "canyons"—roads with very high snow berms on both sides. The canyons would be difficult for the automobile visitor to see out of. Further, they might become serious obstacles to migrating wildlife. Such canyons might trap snow in the windier, open valleys of the Park, creating traffic hazards. Plowing Yellowstone's roads would serve only the economic interests of the surrounding communities by giving them easier access to each other in winter.⁶⁶ For these reasons, the director decided not to plow Yellowstone's interior roads.

Anderson and his staff likewise felt that restricting the Park to snowshoers and skiers could not be justified because only a few very hardy skiers could penetrate such a large park.⁶⁷ As Anderson later stated, "Less than 1/10 of 1% of the people have the capability to go out in the Park in the wintertime, using only skis and snowshoes."⁶⁸ Closing the Park entirely was not an option for Anderson, given the intense pressure he and his staff were feeling to open Yellowstone to automobiles.

That left the third option: developing an over-snow program. "Public pressure to open the Park gave us little choice—we had to do something," Anderson later wrote.⁶⁹ Actually, he struck a compromise between the options. Plowing was inappropriate and too expensive, and skiing-only was too exclusive. Hence, snowmobiling offered a middle ground, a way to allow winter use without the expense of plowing. (The cost of grooming park roads was evidently not known or considered at the time). It

was a solution not too expensive—at that time—for the NPS, and, also, not too exclusive. Most important, it was a way to satisfy those interests who were demanding that he plow the roads. Anderson and his staff committed themselves to developing a winter program for oversnow vehicles.

As finally formalized, Yellowstone's snowmobile policy was:

Snowmobiling, per se, has no place in any natural area of the National Park System:

A snowmobile utilized for controlled access to a natural area is as appropriate in the winter as a conventional motor vehicle is in the summer;

Snowmobiles will be allowed to enter Yellowstone National Park if confined to the snow-covered road system which, during the summer months, accommodates conventional motor vehicles; and

The purpose of allowing oversnow vehicles to enter Yellowstone is to provide an opportunity for winter visitors to see, and enjoy, the many wonderful natural features and wildlife that are present in the Park.⁷⁰

At the time Anderson and his staff made this decision, the only legislation they had to follow was the NPS and Yellowstone Organic Acts. Both acts charged them to provide for the enjoyment of the Park in such a way that the Park's resources would not be impaired for future generations. They were clearly providing for the enjoyment of the Park's winter resources by opening its roads to oversnow vehicles. Likewise, as far as they knew at the time, snowmobile use of the Park would not impair its resources. Finally, public pressure to open the roads was intense. By facilitating visitation while minimizing the adverse effects Anderson thought plowing would have on the Park's wildlife and visitors, he was acting in the best interest of the national park and National Park Service.

Jack Anderson became superintendent of Yellowstone in 1967. He oversaw formulation of the winter use program, began the road grooming operation and opened Old Faithful Snowlodge.



NPS, Yellowstone National Park

⁶⁶ Jack Anderson, "Interview with Jack Anderson, former Park Superintendent," interview by Robert Haraden and Alan Mebane, June 12, 1975, Drawer 3, Tape 75-3: YNP Research Library.

⁶⁷ Robert Haraden (Acting Superintendent), to Lee Wood, March 31, 1972, Box N-118, File "Historical Backcountry Correspondence," YNP Archives.

⁶⁸ Jack Anderson, "Transcript of Conversation, Jack Anderson and Derrick Crandall," interview by Derrick Crandall, April 1, 1977, "Current Stuff" Section, *Snowmobile Briefing Book Vol. 1*, 9. YNP Research Library.

⁶⁹ Jack Anderson to Raymond Euston, July 20, 1972, Box N-118, File "Historical Backcountry Correspondence," YNP Archives.

⁷⁰ Harold J. Estey (Acting Superintendent) to Robert B. Ranck, Dec. 20, 1974, Box W-129, File W42: "Special Regulations, 1973-75," YNP Archives.

Snowmachines (snowmobiles and the larger snowcoaches) tend to create moguls, or bumps, in the road after several machines have traveled the same stretch. Being malleable, snow is easily displaced by the propulsion of the snowmachines. Hence, after a number of snowmobiles have traveled the same stretch of road, it can become a field of moguls, and can present some very difficult, uncomfortable travel conditions. These conditions are what Yellowstone's administrators wished to remedy when they began grooming Yellowstone snow roads. In this way, Yellowstone's administrators hoped to convince the plowing advocates to accept their oversnow-vehicle program.

The road-grooming program had its roots in the activities of park concessionaires, who were the first to attempt to groom the roads. When snowcoaches first started touring Yellowstone in the 1950's, they frequently became stuck in the soft, deep snow of the Park's unplowed, unpacked, and ungroomed roads. To remedy that, tour operators sometimes drove a snowplane ahead of the much heavier snowcoaches to break trail for them. To further flatten the trail, the snowcoach drivers pulled behind them a "drag," a large, heavy wooden contraption that, through its sheer weight and force of friction, smoothed the moguls that had formed.⁷¹ In this way the early tour operators "groomed" the road for their use.⁷²

By the 1960's the Yellowstone Park Company (YPCo.) used its snowcoaches in this manner. Following a snowfall, a company employee went out early the next day with an empty coach to pack the trail for the passenger-carrying coaches following later in the day.⁷³

As late as 1968, the YPCo. was still using its drag to groom the roads. The drag was made of 2 x 12's, was around fifteen feet long, and often required two snowcoaches chained together to pull, especially in new snow.⁷⁴

At the policy meeting in March 1968, the NPS officers discussed a problem with the company's drag. It tore up the asphalt road surface, especially over the thermally bare spots in the roads. Consequently, they recommended to the YPCo. that they investigate the use of a "roller-type device ... similar to those used on ski areas to smooth ski runs."⁷⁵ This was a piece of a galvanized steel culvert pulled behind a grooming machine.

The YPCo. never purchased such a device, because their system of road grooming apparently was adequate for their needs.⁷⁶ The company continued to use its drag on the roads, with its attendant problems.

The coaches often traveled in the very same grooves as previous coaches, leaving behind two parallel deep



NPS, Yellowstone National Park

Trenches created by snowcoach traffic, 1968. Before 1971, the NPS did not regularly groom snow-covered roads for park visitors. After fresh snowfall, Bombardier snowcoaches had to break trail and later coaches traveled in the trail broken by the lead coach. Often they left deep trenches like these.

grooves (where the skis and tracks had traveled) with a large mound of snow between them. The drag that the YPCo. used did not eliminate these deep grooves and mounds,⁷⁷ a situation that made travel difficult for the smaller snowmobiles.⁷⁸

Anderson noted still another problem with the roads: "we found we were starting to have injuries because ... we did not groom roads ... and the roads just used to be terrible," due to the increased numbers of snowmobiles

⁷¹ Bob Jones (former Reservations Manager for YPCo.), telephone interview by author, Moab, Utah, Nov. 17, 1997.

⁷² Walt Stuart, "Interview with Walt Stuart by Leslie Quinn, 1994," November, 1994, Drawer 8, Tape #96-8, YNP Research Library. Stuart also mentions driving the snowplanes on Yellowstone Lake as fast as 130-140 m.p.h., and chasing coyotes on Hebgen Lake with them.

⁷³ Harold Estey (Chief Park Ranger), to Administrative Officer, Oct. 16, 1969, Box A-32, File A88: "Oversnow Vehicle Travel," YNP Archives.

⁷⁴ Jones interview, Nov. 17, 1997.

⁷⁵ "Winter Oversnow Vehicle Operations"—Minutes of March 18, 1968 meeting, Box N-115, File L3427: "Winter Sports—Oversnow Vehicle Use," 1. YNP Archives.

⁷⁶ Bill Hape (former Assistant Chief of Maintenance for the NPS), telephone interview by author, Gardiner, MT, Nov. 13, 1997.

⁷⁷ Bill Hape, in Yellowstone National Park, *Winter Information, 1977* (Unpublished green folder in Vertical Files, YNP Research Library), no page number.

⁷⁸ Jerry Mernin (former Snake River District Ranger), interview by author, Bozeman, MT, Nov. 11, 1997.

entering the Park.⁷⁹ Clearly, there were many problems with Park snow roads at that time.

Consequently, Chief Park Ranger Harold Estey, after attending the 1970 International Snowmobile Congress in Duluth, Minnesota, wrote Anderson that "snowmobile routes, particularly between West Yellowstone and Old Faithful and between Mammoth and Old Faithful, will have to receive tread maintenance."⁸⁰ By February 1970, the NPS was considering "tailoring our snow-covered roads for winter use beginning next winter. With the type of use we are getting and the fact that we do invite this type of use, we are certainly going to have to consider making it safe for the visitor to come into the Park on [snow]machines."⁸¹

Anderson wrote that grooming the roads was the solution:

We made a determination that we should expend some funds and experiment a little bit with road grooming. ...Once we started that, then the whole program started to explode and travel increased perceptibly ...The increase in use just came automatically, almost simply because we had started grooming. It made the [park] unit safe, gave a pleasant trip, and yet it gave access into the Park. You know what happened after that.⁸²

Anderson decided to groom the roads to make them safe and comfortable for snowmobiles. Because maintaining the road for the increasing numbers of

snowmobilers was not the responsibility of the YPCo., the NPS took it over.⁸³ To do that, Park administrators purchased a "mobile planer," an attachment made by the Thiokol Company for its over-snow equipment. It was ready to use by February 3, 1971.⁸⁴ That winter the NPS spent 264 person days on road grooming for oversnow travel.⁸⁵ The Park Service groomed the South Entrance

⁷⁹ "Interview with Jack Anderson, former Park Superintendent," interview by Robert Haraden and Alan Mebane, June 12, 1975, Drawer 3, Tape 75-3: YNP Research Library.

⁸⁰ Harold Estey (Chief Park Ranger) to Superintendent, Feb. 16, 1970, IN Box A-35, File A40: "Conferences & Meetings 1970," YNP Archives, YNP, WY.

⁸¹ Jack Anderson to George F. Baggley, Feb. 26, 1970, IN Box A-36, File D30: "Roads & Trails 1970," YNP Archives, YNP, WY.

⁸² Jack Anderson, "Interview with Jack Anderson, former Park Superintendent," interview by Robert Haraden and Alan Mebane, June 12, 1975, IN Drawer 3, Tape 75-3, YNP Research Library, YNP, WY. In developing his grooming program, Anderson may have conferred with the Bombardier Corporation, a snowmobile manufacturer in Duluth, Minnesota. The document entitled "Snoplan—A Trail Development and Maintenance Program," by Jack Armstrong, the U.S. Snoplan Coordinator of Bombardier Corp. in Duluth, MN (1971) discusses the "Snoplan" developed by Bombardier to groom roads in Yellowstone, Minnesota, and Michigan, with the stated objective of providing a safe environment for snowmobilers and to lessen environmental impact, presumably by confining snowmobiles to the groomed roads and restricting their off-road movements. I have not seen a copy of the original document, but rather only a summary of it by former Yellowstone Planning Office Ranger Kate Scott, so I am unable to discern whether Anderson actually did confer with Bombardier.

⁸³ Jones interview, Nov. 17, 1997.

⁸⁴ Staff Meeting Minutes for Feb. 2, 1971, 3, Box A-37, File A40: "Conferences and Meetings, 1971" YNP Archives. While numerous other sources mention 1970 as the year road grooming began (such as Linda Paganelli, "The Historical Development of Winter Visitor Use at Yellowstone National Park," YNP Research Library Vertical Files, 1980), this is the earliest mention that I could find of it. With 264 person days (53 weeks) of work listed as the number of days spent on grooming that winter, it is likely that the NPS began grooming in December, 1970. Since Paganelli does not cite her source, and because I can not find an original source with a 1970 date on it, I chose to adhere to the Feb., 1971 date.

⁸⁵ Gary Everhart to Director, Midwest Region, Nov. 8, 1971, Box A-47, File A6423: "Park Management 1971: Park Activity Standards," YNP Archives.

Table 3. Winter Visitation to Yellowstone, 1967-73⁹⁰

Year	Visitation type	Concessioner	Private	Season Total	Percent Increase
		Snowcoaches	Machines		
1966-67	Machines	349	1,544	1,893	n/a
	People	3,045	2,173	5,218	96.0%
1967-68	Machines	748	2,352	3,100	63.8%
	People	4,359	3,425	7,784	49.2%
1968-69	Machines	728	4,726	5,454	75.9%
	People	4,249	6,076	10,325	32.6%
1969-70	Machines	504	8,206	8,710	59.7%
	People	4,238	10,978	15,216	47.4%
1970-71	Machines	625	11,614	12,239	40.5%
	People	5,241	14,188	19,429	27.7%
1971-72	Machines	679	17,436	18,115	48.0%
	People	5,529	20,271	25,800	32.8%
1972-73	Machines	602	26,826	27,428	51.4%
	People	3,846	31,771	35,620	38.1%
1973-74	Machines	698	30,513	31,211	13.8%
	People	4,425	35,655	40,080	12.5%
1974-75	Machines	776	26,400	27,176	-12.9%
	People	5,537	30,763	36,300	-9.4%

to West Thumb, the West Yellowstone to Old Faithful stretch, and the road from West Yellowstone to Canyon and Mammoth.⁸⁶ Yellowstone's administrators targeted the more heavily-used roads on the west side of the Park. The roads on the east side of the Park remained open to snowmobiles, but were left ungroomed.

Beginning this grooming program was new for Anderson and the NPS. Anderson frequently corresponded with snowmobile clubs, especially some clubs in the upper Midwest, for advice on the mechanics of snow grooming.⁸⁷ Chief Ranger Estey's attendance at the International Snowmobile Congress in Duluth probably facilitated this correspondence. Perhaps this assistance from the snowmobile industry is the "cooperation" referred to by Anderson when he stated: "We've had the cooperation of not only the national but also the international snowmobile associations. We've had the cooperation of the industry itself and, of course, the industry recognized Yellowstone as the leader in winter recreation."⁸⁸

Indeed, Anderson was correct, because the number of snowmobiles entering Yellowstone jumped in the next several winters, thanks to his efforts to provide a comfortable, safe, family experience. As *Table 3* illustrates, snowmobile visitation experienced dramatic increases in the early 1970's. Anderson looked forward to snowmobile visitation increasing,⁸⁹ which is precisely what happened. His compromise appeared to be working.

Attempts by the Yellowstone Park Company to open the Snowlodge began with the company letter to Superintendent McLaughlin in 1966 requesting that it be allowed to open the "Old Faithful Motor Hotel."⁹⁰ McLaughlin responded, asking that the YPCo. officials meet with him directly to discuss the matter.⁹² Whether they ever did is unclear, but it is likely. At the congressional hearing in Jackson that summer, McLaughlin stated that if the YPCo. opened any facilities at Old Faithful for winter visitors, it would be the Campers Cabin building (probably the same building as the "Motor Hotel"), since it was partly winterized. If fully winterized, this building could provide accommodations and meals for 100 people.⁹³

The idea was apparently shelved. There seems to be no other information regarding it until 1971. In the meantime, the YPCo. opened another hotel in Yellowstone for winter visitation—the "Mammoth Motor Inn" (now known as the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel). Because visitation was increasing, and the hotel was (and is) located on a plowed road, the Yellowstone Park Company opened it for the winter 1966-67 season.⁹⁴

Additionally, the YPCo. began snowcoach tours from Mammoth in 1966. Logically, it needed an open facility in that area.⁹⁵ The hotel stayed open for a total of four consecutive winters, but it never made much money, probably because it was not located in the interior of Yellowstone where most winter visitors were. It was located in the lower-elevation, northern part of the Park, where the plowed road first turned into the snowmobile road. Additionally, it was twenty more miles from it to Old Faithful than the famous geyser was from the hotels in West Yellowstone. As a result, the hotels in West drew more business. The YPCo. closed the facility in 1970.⁹⁶

With visitation increasing, especially to the ever-popular Old Faithful, both NPS and YPCo. officials considered opening a hotel there in winter. About 1969, discussions began on opening a lodge at Old Faithful in winter. Initially, the officials were discussing just opening a food service facility to serve the increasing numbers of visitors, but eventually expanded the idea to include some simple lodging.⁹⁷ Demand for some form of lodging and meal service at Old Faithful was obvious.⁹⁸ In fact, the NPS reported that an increasing number of snowmobilers were using the heated restrooms at Old Faithful to eat and *sleep* in. In the 1960s there was no other place to spend the night at Old Faithful (or for that matter, to

⁸⁶ Robert E. Sellers (Acting Chief Park Ranger) to Gene Bryan (Wyoming Travel Commission), Dec. 20, 1971, Box L-36, File L3427: "Recreation Activities: Winter Sports," YNP Archives.

⁸⁷ Hape interview, Nov. 13, 1997. There is no extant correspondence between Anderson or Hape and the snowmobile groups.

⁸⁸ Jack Anderson, "Interview with Jack Anderson, former Park Superintendent," interview by Robert Haraden, and Alan Mebane, June 12, 1975, Drawer 3, Tape 75-3: YNP Research Library.

⁸⁹ Dale Nuss (former Park Ranger, Yellowstone), interview by author, Bridger Canyon, Mont., Nov. 11, 1997.

⁹⁰ Summary Record of Snowmobile Use, Yellowstone National Park, 1966 through April, 1978, Box K-57, File "Winter Activities," YNP Archives.

⁹¹ Ronald R. Beaumont to John S. McLaughlin, April 5, 1966, Box C-4, File C38: "Concessioner Contracts & Permits," YNP Archives.

⁹² John McLaughlin S. (Superintendent) to Art Bazata (General Manager, YPCo), April 12, 1966, Box C-4, File C38: "Concessioner Contracts & Permits," YNP Archives.

⁹³ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, on Winter Operation of Roads in Yellowstone National Park*, Ninetieth Congress, Second Session, 1968, 13.

⁹⁴ *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for December, 1966*, 11. YNP Research Library.

⁹⁵ Nuss interview, Nov. 11, 1997.

⁹⁶ John D. Amerman to Jack Anderson, Aug. 19, 1970, Box C-24, File "Concessions Bldgs," YNP Archives.

⁹⁷ Jones interview, Nov. 17, 1997.

⁹⁸ Hape interview, Nov. 13, 1997.



All photos, NPS, Yellowstone National Park



The National Park Service began to groom the roads regularly in 1971. This photo of one of the early grooming machines was taken in 1975.

Snowmobiles on Dunraven Pass, 1979 (above). This party is at "Mae West" curve on the Dunraven Pass road. The NPS now prohibits snowmobiles on this stretch of road, for safety reasons.



In 1971, the Yellowstone Park Company opened the Snowlodge at Old Faithful to provide overnight accommodations. The temporary "Snow Lodge" sign covered the more permanent "Campers Cabins" sign underneath. In 1973, the company permanently renamed the building "Old Faithful Snowlodge," and tore it down in 1998.

relieve oneself).⁹⁹ Furthermore, Chief Ranger Estey, again just back from Duluth, stated that "minimum concessioner services consisting of shelter, gas and oil, and sanitary facilities ... should be available at Old Faithful."¹⁰⁰ By the next summer, the YPCo. was "seriously considering opening facilities at Old Faithful this winter."¹⁰¹

On December 17, 1971, the Old Faithful Snowlodge opened for its first winter season. Open through March 19, 1972, the Snowlodge featured "simple, pleasant and comfortable lodging spiced with hearty western food and beverage and nature's grandest winter display. ... Single, twin and triple rooms are available. All are convenient to centrally located bath facilities."¹⁰² It was the Campers Cabin building with a new name,¹⁰³ with 34 rooms (without bath). The rooms were used in summer by the employees of the Campers Cabin facility. The company chose this building because it was one of their newer buildings at Old Faithful, and it was already winterized. Although they discussed opening all or part of Old Faithful Inn, they did not follow through on this idea because the Inn would have needed extensive renovation and winterizing.¹⁰⁴ Heating the Inn would have been next to impossible, with its 80-foot-high non-insulated ceiling.

The YPCo. offered several tour packages at the Snowlodge as well as snowshoeing, ski touring, and snowcoach tours.¹⁰⁵ The Snowlodge and its tours were clearly popular. In fact, the concessionaire still offers these services today.

After the crucial policy meeting in March 1968, Anderson realized he would have to promote the new winter policy to get it to work and to get the locals to buy into it. As he later said,

We did the best thing ... try and develop a ... viable winter program. So, we went ... to ... the International [Snowmobile Industry Association], and we talked to the manufacturers to try and [sic] encourage them to come in to West Yellowstone and here. We drew some people in who had high public visibility—Lowell Thomas was one.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ "Winter Oversnow Vehicle Operations"—Minutes of March 18, 1968 meeting, Box N-115, File L3427: "Winter Sports—Oversnow Vehicle Use," YNP Archives.

¹⁰⁰ Harold Estey (Chief Park Ranger) to Superintendent, Feb. 16, 1970, Box A-35, File A40: "Conferences & Meetings 1970," YNP Archives.

¹⁰¹ Staff Meeting Minutes for July 20, 1971, Box A-37, File A40: "Conferences & Meetings, 1971," YNP Archives.

¹⁰² "Yellowstone Snowtime Adventures," promotional brochure for Old Faithful Snowlodge for its first season, 1971-72, located at Chief Executive's Office, AmFac Parks & Resorts, Mammoth Hot Springs, YNP, Wyoming.

¹⁰³ Yellowstone National Park, *Winter Information, 1977* (Unpublished green folder in Vertical Files, YNP Research Library), no page number.

¹⁰⁴ Jones interview, Nov. 17, 1997.

¹⁰⁵ "Yellowstone Snowtime Adventures."

¹⁰⁶ Jack Anderson, "Interview with Jack Anderson, former Park Superintendent," interview by Robert Haraden and Alan Mebane, June 12, 1975, Drawer 3, Tape 75-3: YNP Research Library.



Old Faithful always has been the most popular winter destination. Visitors, in 1971, watch from their vehicles as the geyser erupts. This is no longer possible. The road was closed to winter traffic in 1974.



Snowmobiles create bumpy roads. Without regular grooming, the roads become fields of moguls. This is Seven-Mile Bridge on the West Entrance Road in 1972.

NPS, Yellowstone National Park

Clearly, Anderson promoted his new program as best he could. It is uncertain, however, just what he meant by talking with the manufacturers and encouraging them to come in to the Park and West Yellowstone.¹⁰⁷

He promoted snowmobile use of Yellowstone—at a very critical time for the snowmobile industry. In the late 1960's, there were more than one hundred snowmobile manufacturers. Most were attempting to develop a market for their products in the West.¹⁰⁸ To do that, they were subsidizing the snowmobile industry in West Yellowstone by making snowmobiles available through low-priced leases. Anderson may have seen a mutually beneficial agreement with the snowmobile industry. Opening Yellowstone to snowmobile visitation would satisfy politicians. The industry could simultaneously achieve its objective of developing the western snowmobile market. Indeed, by 1972, the snowmobile manufacturers were leasing their machines to several West Yellowstone motel owners, who in turn rented them to winter visitors.¹⁰⁹

Anderson publicized the new winter policy by inviting reporters and by writing newspaper articles about Yellowstone in winter. For example, Lowell Thomas, a well-known radio commentator, visited Yellowstone in winter during this time period and gave several nationwide radio addresses about his visit to the Park in winter.¹¹⁰ Anderson wrote an article promoting a visit to Yellowstone in winter, stating “each year more folks are coming to see the Park during what used to be the ‘closed’ season but closed no more.”¹¹¹

Anderson also promoted Yellowstone's winter program by permitting another demonstration snowmobile trip, this time around the Park's Grand Loop (with the exception of the road from Tower Falls to Mammoth, which was plowed for automobile use). A group of 28 men and women sponsored by the Big Sky Snowriders, a snowmobile group from Livingston, Montana, took three days to complete the 182-mile ride, camping out in the Park along the way.¹¹² Their trip was precedent-setting in that it was the first such circumnavigation of all the Park roads in one trip and further demonstrated the touring possibilities of the snowmobile in Yellowstone.

By 1971, Superintendent Anderson had an official policy allowing snow machines the use of Yellowstone's roads in the winter. He cemented the policy in place by promoting it publicly, providing comfortable snowmobile roads, and opening a place to stay overnight within the Park.

At the time snowmobiles must have seemed relatively benign, despite their high level of noise. Administrators felt that snowmobiles were to winter as automobiles were to summer. Hence, they did not feel it necessary to examine the environmental side effects of the things. Nor could any reasonable person likely have foreseen just how much snowmobile visitation would grow. The managers were doing what they thought was best for Yellowstone. Moreover, at the time, the Park's managers felt that opening the Park to snowmobiles carried fewer impacts than plowing the roads would have. In allowing snowmobiles into Yellowstone, Anderson and his staff were motivated to act in the Park's best interest and in the best interest of the NPS.

¹⁰⁷ Of the seven associates of Anderson's that I interviewed, none could say conclusively what Anderson meant by this remark. Mary Meagher (research biologist, Yellowstone), telephone interview by author, Gardiner, MT, Nov. 3, 1997; Bob Haraden (former Assistant Superintendent of Yellowstone), interview by author, Bozeman, MT, Nov. 11, 1997; Harold Estey, telephone interview by author, Norfolk, NE, Nov. 12, 1997; Terry Danforth, interview by author, Bozeman, MT, Nov. 20, 1997; and author's interviews with Hape, Nov. 13, 1997; Mernin, Nov. 11, 1997; and Nuss, Nov. 11, 1997.

¹⁰⁸ Darcy L. Fawcett, “Colonial Status: The Search for Independence in West Yellowstone, Montana” (Professional Paper submitted to Montana State University), Dec. 17, 1993, 21.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 23, 27.

¹¹⁰ Jack Anderson to Lowell Thomas, March 17, 1969, IN Box A-158, File A3821: “Public Relations 1969 (Individuals),” YNP Archives, YNP, WY.

¹¹¹ Jack Anderson to Fred Martin (Editor of the *Park County News*), Dec. 29, 1969, IN Box A-158, File A3815: “Public Relations 1969 (Federal, State & Local Agencies),” YNP Archives, YNP, WY.

¹¹² “Snowriders to Tour Yellowstone's Loop,” *The Billings Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1967.

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Project Wagon Wheel: A

Project Plowshare was the name given by the Atomic Energy Commission to a project that sought "to find practical industrial and scientific uses for nuclear explosives."¹ The AEC could make the Biblical leap to beat its "swords (bombs) into plowshares."² One idea for Project Plowshare would have used deeply buried nuclear explosions to form chimneys of broken rock into underground reservoirs for water in arid regions.

Scientists, during the 1960s and 1970s, developed the new and exciting technology of nuclear stimulation in the energy field. Nuclear stimulation, a process where natural gas trapped in tight formations is released, was going to be the answer to the nation's energy crisis, at least in the view of project proponents.

The process in which the chimneys stimulated the production of natural gas attracted the attention of El Paso Natural Gas Company. The firm signed a contract with the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of the Interior to explore the feasibility of using nuclear stimulation in natural gas production. The agreement was signed January 31, 1967.³

Plowshare's only focus, seemed to be nuclear stimulation. The Atomic Energy Commission's *1972 Annual Report* gave a glowing review of research progress. The research had high-

level support. President Richard Nixon, in 1971, had "cited this nuclear stimulation technology as one of four Federal technological efforts undertaken to alleviate the Nation's natural gas shortage."⁴

Four nuclear stimulation projects were planned during the Plowshare years, three of which were detonated. The first stimulation project detonated by the Atomic Energy Commission was Project Gasbuggy near Farmington, New Mexico, in the northwestern corner of the state.

Project Gasbuggy, a single 29-kiloton nuclear device, was detonated December 10, 1967, and received little negative publicity. In fact, the project was "heralded by the New Mexico Governor, the State's Senators, and members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy."⁵

The newspaper coverage in New Mexico was generally positive. The day after the test shot, one newspaper included a photograph of a Native American with an employee of the El Paso Natural Gas Company. The caption read, "Space Age First Helps First American."⁶ Pamphlets describing the project were printed in Spanish and English and distributed widely.⁷

Interestingly, "New Mexico congressmen consistently pressed for progress on Gasbuggy, and some were unhappy with the AEC (Atomic En-

By Ada

From "Nuclear Stimulation of Natural Gas," Hearing of the Subcommittee on Lands, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 93rd Congress, May 11, 1973, 44



Nuclear Plowshare for Wyoming

ergy Commission) for what they felt were unwarranted delays in the Gasbuggy timetable."⁸ This project was welcomed and encouraged by members of the state's government. Project Gasbuggy was considered a technical success according to many because the "shot stimulated gas flow into the well to a degree somewhat greater than had been possible through conventional techniques, but uncertainty remained as to how much improvement had occurred."⁹ The project went forward because of overwhelming support from both elected officials and those living in the area.¹⁰

The second nuclear stimulation project, Project Rulison, in Colorado faced opposition. Environmental groups filed suits opposing the project. In the Project Rulison test, a single nuclear device of 40 kilotons, was detonated Sept. 10, 1969, near the town

* This article is adapted from Adam Lederer's Political Science Master's thesis, *Using Public Policy Models to Evaluate Nuclear Stimulation Projects: Wagon Wheel in Wyoming*. (University of Wyoming, April 1998). The author wishes to thank the members of the Wagon Wheel Information Committee for providing him with information for this article.

¹ Atomic Energy Commission, 1964 *Financial Report*, 17.

² Isaiah 2:4

³ Evidence suggests it may not have been the first contract for nuclear stimulation. In 1963, El Paso, the AEC and the Department of the Interior jointly studied the feasibility of nuclear stimulation. See Frank Kreith and Catherine B. Wrenn, *The Nuclear Impact: A Case Study of the Plowshare Program to Produce Gas by Underground Nuclear Stimulation in the Rocky Mountains*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc., 1976), 13.

⁴ Atomic Energy Commission, 1972 *Financial Report*, 36. On June 4, 1971, Nixon delivered a "Special Message to the Congress on Energy Resources," that incorporated the term "nuclear stimulation" while describing efforts to reduce the current shortage of natural gas. In the message, Nixon states "this relatively clean form of energy is in even greater demand to help satisfy air quality standards. Our present supply of natural gas is limited, however, and we are beginning to face shortages which could intensify as we move to implement the air quality standards." Nixon noted that federal effort to help alleviate the shortage included "Progress in nuclear stimulation experiments which seek to produce natural gas from tight geologic formations which cannot presently be utilized in ways which are economically and environmentally acceptable." Richard Nixon, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Richard Nixon 1971*, (GPO, 1971), 710.

⁵ Kreith and Wrenn, 49.

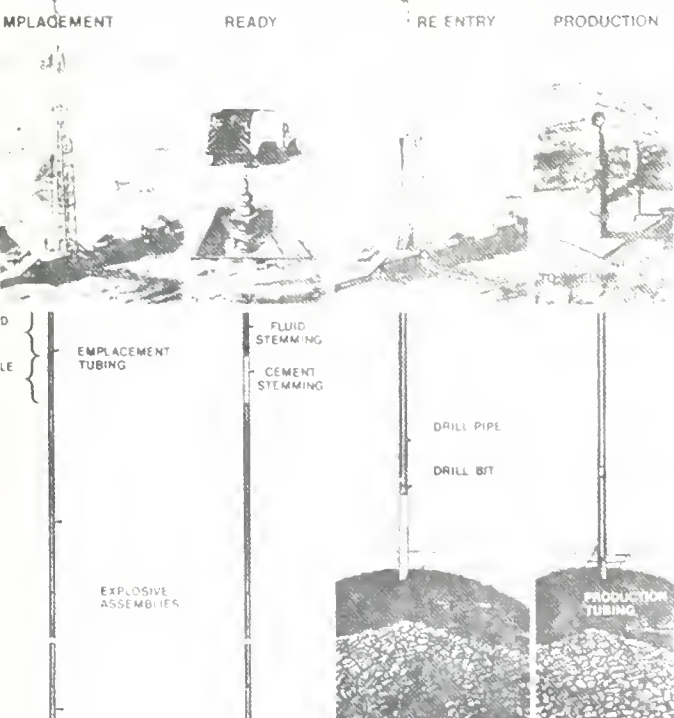
⁶ Kreith and Wrenn, 55.

⁷ Kreith and Wrenn, 54.

⁸ Kreith and Wrenn, 54.

⁹ Kreith and Wrenn, 68.

¹⁰ Today a plaque marks the point of detonation on the surface: "Project Gasbuggy Nuclear Explosive Emplacement/Reentry Well (GB-ER) Site of the First United States Underground Nuclear Experiment for the Stimulation of Low-Productivity Gas Reservoirs. A 29 Kiloton Nuclear Explosive Was Detonated at a Depth of 4227 feet Below This Surface Location on December 10, 1967. No excavation, drilling, and/or removal of materials to a true vertical depth of 1500 feet is permitted within a radius of 100 feet of this surface location. Nor any similar excavation, drilling, and/or removal of subsurface materials between the true vertical depth of 1500 feet to 4500 feet is permitted within a 600 foot radius of T 29 N, R 4 W, New Mexico Principal Meridian, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico without U. S. Government Permission. United States Department of Energy, November 1978." Bureau of Atomic Tourism, "Project Gasbuggy," (<http://www.oz.net/~chrisp/gasbug.htm>) Author accessed site March 23, 1998.



commercial fielding concept for a nuclear explosive for gas stimulation, as conceived for Project Wagon Wheel in Sublette County, early 1970s.

of Rifle, Colorado. The site was beneath 73-year-old Claude Hayward's 292-acre potato-patch. Initially offered \$100 a month for the rest of his life to use the property, Hayward declined. Later "the AEC came back around with a whiskey bottle and got him good and juiced up and said they would pay him \$200 a month for the rest of his life."¹¹ Heyward signed.

Unlike Gasbuggy, the Rulison project faced opposition from a number of protestors both at the scene and in the court system. The day the project was detonated, four protestors paired off and just before detonation made their presence known using fireworks inside the secured zone. A helicopter swept two of the protestors out of the area while the other two remained and experienced the blast's shock waves.

Another protestor was in the U. S. Supreme Court when the bomb went off. Tom Lamm, brother of future Colorado Governor Dick Lamm, appealed to the Supreme Court to stop the project. He lost. Tom Lamm said he "got kicked all over the court, but everybody was real nice because they all knew that I was just a dumb kid from Colorado." After the ruling was released, Tom Lamm spent time thanking clerks, avoiding the press waiting for him outside. When he finally left the building, "the first thing they said was that the bomb just went off."¹²

Meanwhile, local residents met the Rulison detonation with a "fun afternoon." In fact, one local resident "remembers being irritated by the protestors who'd come in from out of town."¹³ The preliminary results "indicated that the experiment had demonstrated the technical feasibility of nuclear stimulation of gas in the Rulison field."¹⁴

There were several noteworthy outcomes of the Rulison project. First, Heyward never got any money for letting the bomb go off beneath his potato-patch: under the contract he signed, Heyward "got paid only if the well made money for the energy companies."¹⁵ Second, in 1974 through a citizen's initiative, Colorado voters amended the state's constitution to require any project to detonate a nuclear bomb in Colorado "must first pass a statewide vote of the people."¹⁶ Third, Dick Lamm credits Rulison with helping to "launch the state's environmental movement along with his candidacy for governor."¹⁷

The third nuclear stimulation project was Rio Blanco. The project, detonated May 17, 1973, was located in western Colorado in Rio Blanco County. Rio Blanco differed from its predecessors because it used three 30-kiloton nuclear devices stacked vertically and detonated simultaneously. The objective of Rio Blanco was to

determine if detonating the nuclear devices would result in the three bombs creating one "rubble chimney," thus producing more natural gas.¹⁸ Technically speaking, Project Rio Blanco was a failure because "there was no communication between the top and the lower chimneys," defeating the purpose of the design.¹⁹

The dynamics of the Rio Blanco political situation were dramatically different from Gasbuggy and Rulison. The energy crisis had hit home in Colorado during the preceding winter when "Denver public schools were briefly forced to curtail the school week because of (their) inability to heat school buildings."²⁰

Unlike Rulison, the strongest voices opposing Project Rio Blanco came not from environmentalists, but from industry. TOSCO (The Oil Shale Company) took center stage with the argument that the project would "destroy the opportunity to exploit overlying oil-shale formations."²¹

However in the end, local residents appeared to be in favor of Rio Blanco. In fact, "a Rio Blanco county commissioner expressed exasperation that some of Colorado's elected representatives seemed to pay less attention to the local area residents who favored the project than to some 'so-called experts who live as far away as Connecticut.'" Project Rio Blanco was detonated because the resistance was muted—local residents favored the project and elsewhere the story got "lost amid coverage of Watergate and other stories of the day."²²

Project Wagon Wheel was to be Wyoming's nuclear stimulation project, nestled in Sublette County, Wyoming. However, unlike its predecessors Wagon Wheel was not detonated.

The county is located in southwestern Wyoming and in 1970 had a population of 3,755. There were four

¹¹ Scott C. Yates, "The Day They Bombed Colorado." *Westword*, (February 26, 1998), 23-24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Kreith and Wrenn, 106.

¹⁵ Yates, 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁸ Kreith and Wrenn, 125-126.

¹⁹ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. "Project Rio Blanco," (http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/lr/en_riobl.htm). Site accessed March 24, 1998. 9:30 a.m. MST.

²⁰ Kreith and Wrenn, 126.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

²² Yates, 27.

towns between ten and twenty miles from the blast site in Sublette County, Wyoming:

Town	Population	Town	Population
Pinedale	950	Marbleton	220
Big Piney	570	Boulder	75

Wagon Wheel, had it been tested, would have detonated five nuclear devices sequentially from bottom to top between 9,220 feet and 11,570 feet below the surface of Sublette County. The detonations would have created an underground rubble chimney approximately 2,800 feet high and about 1,000 feet in diameter.²³ The five nuclear devices would have been 100 kilotons each²⁴ and detonated approximately five minutes apart.²⁵ It was estimated by one geologist, William Barbat, that "the nuclear energy to be released in the stimulation of Wagon Wheel ... is about 35 times as great as the energy of the gas which is expected to be produced."²⁶

After the blast, El Paso would have waited between four and six months to allow for the decay of "short-lived radioisotopes" before test production of natural gas. Even then, there would be some release of radiation during the 325-day flaring of the well. According to the AEC, "the resulting total maximum radiation dose which would be received by a local resident from the production testing activity is found to be a small fraction of the natural background radiation." The AEC did not anticipate contamination of groundwater either.²⁷

Had the test been successful in stimulating natural gas, it would have been mild compared to what the AEC planned when El Paso started full field production. There could have been as many as forty to fifty nuclear detonations a year, some within a mile of Pinedale, Wyoming.²⁸ Dr. Ken Perry, a University of Wyoming geologist and rancher, said the area could, "become the earthquake center of the world" based upon the AEC prediction.²⁹

Technical History

In 1954, the El Paso Natural Gas Company (EPNG) found a gas field between 7,500 and 10,700 feet below the surface south of Pinedale in Sublette County.³⁰ El Paso drilled six wells and figured there were approximately four trillion standard cubic feet of natural gas in the field. However, the natural gas was in low-permeability sandstone formations and the available technology to fracture the rock did not justify building a

pipeline to the field.³¹ A worker at the original site said, "You'll have to blow the hell out of the rock to get the g- d- gas."³² Another worker, an oil field contractor, told Owen Frank, in the late 1950's, "The only way they'll get it out is to set off an atomic bomb down there."³³ The nuclear stimulation concept for the Pinedale unit was proposed to the AEC by El Paso in 1958.³⁴

In 1963 several government agencies agreed to a feasibility study of nuclear stimulation. In December, 1967, Gasbuggy, the first nuclear stimulation project, was detonated near Farmington, New Mexico. The results of the test explosion encouraged El Paso Natural Gas to sign a contract a year later to study Wagon Wheel.³⁵ El Paso described Wagon Wheel as

...a joint effort between El Paso Natural Gas Company and the Federal Government of the United States of America to further develop the use of underground

²³ "AEC Supports Nuclear Blast Near Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 1, 1972, 2. The article refers to the blast in the past tense: "The blast was expected to result...." Perhaps the author(s) of the article had a vision that it would never actually occur.

²⁴ Each device would have been approximately five times as powerful as the World War II atomic bombs. "AEC Says Plans for 'Wagon Wheel' OK," *Casper Star Tribune*, April 1, 1972, 11.

²⁵ Frank, "Dangers of Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 10, 1972, 10.

²⁶ Mackey, "Who's 'Plowed Under'?" *Casper Star Tribune*, June 25, 1972, 5.

²⁷ "AEC Supports Nuclear Blast Near Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 1, 1972, 2.

²⁸ Frank, "Dangers of Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 10, 1972, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ El Paso acquired its rights to the Pinedale Unit in 1954, the same year they discovered the reserves. El Paso Natural Gas Company, *Project Wagon Wheel Technical Studies Report*, ii.

³¹ Frank, "'Only way to get it out,'" *Casper Star Tribune*, May 9, 1972, 9.

³² "Work force of 2,000 seen for Wagonwheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 14, 1972, 9.

³³ Frank, "'Only way to get it out,'" *Casper Star Tribune*, May 9, 1972, 9. In 1972 Owen Frank was the State Editor for the *Casper Star Tribune*, but he does not specify what position he held in the late 1950s, except that he refers to himself as "this writer." In addition there is no evidence as to what position the oil field engineer held and with what company.

³⁴ El Paso Natural Gas Company, *Project Wagon Wheel Technical Studies Report*, 1971, ii.

³⁵ Frank, "'Only way to get it out,'" *Casper Star Tribune*, May 9, 1972, 9. Ironically, while "Gasbuggy" project encouraged El Paso, a University of Colorado study of the second nuclear detonation, "Rulison," decided it was an economic failure. The project produced \$1.4 million worth of natural gas, but cost \$11 million. "Rio Blanco Opposed," *High Country News*, March 16, 1973, 11.

nuclear explosions to stimulate low permeability natural gas reservoirs. Cooperating on the project are El Paso Natural Gas Company, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), and the U.S. Department of Interior as specified in Contract No. AT(26-1)-422 between the United States of America and El Paso Natural Gas Company, dated December 24, 1968.³⁶

It should be noted that there are conflicting dates as to when the project was initially started. Some sources suggest that the project started January 24, 1968, when "a detailed project definition was begun by El Paso, the AEC, and the Department of the Interior to evaluate the potential of nuclear stimulation techniques in the Pinedale area."³⁷

The same document reveals that on July 30, 1969, the WASP (Wyoming Atomic Stimulation Project) project was started. It was "composed of seven independent oil companies, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of the Interior (and) began a detailed project definition of using nuclear explosions in the Pinedale, Wyoming, area."³⁸

In any case, Wagon Wheel differed from Gasbuggy because "its goals include obtaining cost information as well as technical information." Gasbuggy's objectives were to figure out the engineering, but not to be a profitable investment.³⁹

Initially, the project gained little publicity in Wyoming. Apparently, the first article about Wagon Wheel appeared in the *Casper Star-Tribune*, the only statewide newspaper in Wyoming, on February 1, 1972.⁴⁰ The Wagon Wheel test was scheduled for 1973⁴¹ when it was announced initially.⁴² As time passed, the date for the test was postponed. On June 14, 1972, an article in the *Casper Star Tribune* noted that El Paso had delayed the test until 1974.⁴³ A day later, a front-page story in the Rock Springs newspaper confirmed the delay. According to the article, El Paso had announced Wagon Wheel would not be conducted in 1973, and that 1974 might not be feasible.⁴⁴

Less than a month later, Dr. James Schlesinger, then head of the AEC, predicted the test was at least five years away — in 1977.⁴⁵ In September, the AEC announced that "the project is still in the design stage and no execution has been authorized as yet," and that the test would probably not occur before fall 1974.⁴⁶ Confusion continued; the project was planned for spring 1974 in October,⁴⁷ while in December, it was "slated to take place sometime in 1975."⁴⁸

The exact date Wagon Wheel died is also unclear. President Nixon's budget for fiscal year 1974 did not include funding for tests under Plowshare, which in-

cluded Wagon Wheel.⁴⁹ By May 22, 1973, Wagon Wheel had "been shelved at least temporarily because of lack of funding."⁵⁰ According to one source, Nixon's director of the AEC, Dr. Dixy Lee Ray⁵¹ "announced that Project Wagon Wheel was dead for the foreseeable future," but a search of the references cited failed to turn up supporting evidence.⁵²

The test-well drilled for Wagon Wheel was never used in a nuclear test but was employed by EPNG to conduct tests of "Massive Hydraulic Fracturing" (MHF) during 1974 and 1975. MHF is a method where water is pumped into a well until the pressure of the water causes the rocks to fracture. The study used the well originally drilled for Wagon Wheel,⁵³ and concluded the MHF "technique employed [was] not commercially feasible."⁵⁴

³⁶ El Paso Natural Gas Company, *Project Wagon Wheel Technical Studies Report*, 1971, ii.

³⁷ Whan. 1973. A-3.

³⁸ Whan. 1973. A-4.

³⁹ El Paso Natural Gas Company, *Project Wagon Wheel Technical Studies Report*, 1971, ii.

⁴⁰ "AEC Supports Nuclear Blast Near Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 1, 1972, 2.

⁴¹ "AEC Supports Nuclear Blast Near Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 1, 1972, 2.

⁴² One article suggests that EPNG wanted to fire the test in 1972, but was set back by a lack of funds. Frank "'Only way to get it out,'" *Casper Star Tribune*, May 9, 1972, 9.

⁴³ "Plowed under," (editorial), *Casper Star Tribune*, June 14, 1972, 4.

⁴⁴ "No Wagon Wheel Blast Possible In '73: EPNG," *Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner*, June 15, 1972, 1.

⁴⁵ "AEC chief says 1977 for Wagon Wheel test," *Casper Star Tribune*, July 8, 1972, 7.

⁴⁶ "AEC estimates damage from Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, September 22, 1972, 13.

⁴⁷ "Wagon Wheel gets new questions," *Casper Star Tribune*, October 3, 1972, 1.

⁴⁸ "Each WW well gives tax return," *Casper Star Tribune*, December 2, 1972, 5.

⁴⁹ "AEC budget has no test funds," *Casper Star Tribune*, January 31, 1973, 11.

⁵⁰ "Roncalio requests cutoff of gas stimulation money," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 22, 1973, 11.

⁵¹ Dr. Dixy Lee Ray became chairman of the AEC shortly before the WWIC went to Washington.

⁵² Kreith, *The Nuclear Impact*, 168. The authors cite both the *Rocky Mountain News* on May 12, 1973 and the *Denver Post* on May 22, 1973. Additionally, the *Casper Star Tribune* appears not to have quoted Ray about Wagon Wheel during May 1973..

⁵³ El Paso Natural Gas Company, *Pinedale Unit MHF Experiments Final Report*, 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

Public Participation

It's not really clear when the news about Wagon Wheel was made known to the public. However, on December 1, 1971, a letter was written to Wyoming Governor Stanley K. Hathaway referring to a November 8, 1971, Associated Press dispatch from Anchitka, Alaska. According to the letter, the AEC "was planning or conceiving of nuclear blasts in Wyoming." The author of the letter, whose identity was not revealed, urged the governor to "fight against any AEC doings in Wyoming."⁵⁵ Hathaway responded December 10:

I am not aware of any planned nuclear test blasts by the AEC for Wyoming. I am confident that if the AEC plans such action that it will take the necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of Wyoming citizens and our environment.⁵⁶

In Pinedale, the Wagon Wheel Information Committee (WWIC) was formed by a group of local residents, "to impartially gather all pertinent information regarding the Wagon Wheel Project."

If Hathaway had not known about Wagon Wheel when he wrote the letter, he learned about it on February 1, 1972, the date the first article about Wagon Wheel was published in the *Casper Star Tribune*.⁵⁷

Six days later the *Casper Star-Tribune* published the first editorial on the project. Titled, "Shaking Up Ecologists," the paper noted "we can anticipate at least some murmurs of disapproval from conservationists." The editorial defended the project by noting "Similar nuclear stimulations, like Gasbuggy and Rulison have failed to shake up the Rockies — but there is always that prospect of shaking up the ecologists." Ending on an upbeat note, the paper hoped the "experiment will contribute to relieving the future shortage of natural gas in this country."⁵⁸

Meanwhile, in Pinedale, the Wagon Wheel Information Committee (WWIC) was formed by a group of local residents, "to impartially gather all pertinent information regarding the Wagon Wheel Project."⁵⁹ As a result of their study, they opposed the nuclear stimulation project.

Before arriving at that conclusion, the committee members performed extensive work. They consulted experts in various fields connected with petroleum exploration, geology, nuclear physics, and game and fish biology. They read and analyzed data submitted by a wide variety of organizations, including the Atomic Energy Commission, Lawrence-Livermore Laboratory, El Paso Natural Gas and others.

Information on both sides of the issue was made available to the people of Sublette County, through their library system. The committee sponsored public meetings, in order that the members might have the benefit of informed public opinion in reaching a conclusion.⁶⁰

While the *Casper Star Tribune* continued its pro-Wagon Wheel stance until May 1972, it was evident the public, at least in Sublette County, did not agree with the paper. When, in a later editorial, the *Casper Star Tribune* stated "Emotional conservationists, as usual, grabbed the scene at a meeting in Pinedale,"⁶¹ the paper received a heated letter from Phyllis Birr,⁶² a member of the Wagon Wheel Information Committee.

Countering the paper's editorial about the March 20 meeting, Birr's letter contended that the meeting, "was conducted on an intelligent and organized basis." Birr added that the newspaper's "attitude is one of total ignorance of the situation."⁶³

It was not Birr's first letter to an editor about the proposal. The previous month, she wrote to *High Country News*, an environmental newspaper then based in Lander, Wyoming, commenting on an editorial by Tom Bell, the paper's editor.⁶⁴ Bell wrote that the planned atomic devices were "the sort of thing once dropped on an alien people another world away. Now it is being dropped in our laps."⁶⁵ Birr wrote to Bell telling about the WWIC:

We have formed a committee ... with the sponsorship of our County Commissioners...we urge all your readers to write to their elected representatives to pro-

⁵⁵ Plumme, *The Wagon Wheel Contention*, 7.

⁵⁶ Plumme, *The Wagon Wheel Contention*, (printed in back of book, about p. 198).

⁵⁷ "AEC Supports Nuclear Blast Near Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 1, 1972, 2.

⁵⁸ "Shaking Up Ecologists," (editorial), *Casper Star Tribune*, February 7, 1972, 4.

⁵⁹ Wagon Wheel Information Committee, *Statement of Opposition to Project Wagon Wheel*. (Pinedale, Wyoming: Wagon Wheel Information Committee, n.d., c. 1973), 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*

⁶¹ "Welcome Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, March 25, 1972, 6.

⁶² Birr was also a journalist for the *Pinedale Roundup*, according to Sally Mackey. Mackey, phone interview by author, 1995.

⁶³ Birr, "Emotional Ecologist?" (letter to the editor), *Casper Star Tribune*, April 4, 1972, 5.

⁶⁴ *High Country News* is now based in Paonia, Colorado.

⁶⁵ Bell, "High Country," *High Country News*, March 17, 1972, 2.



Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources

Gov. Stan Hathaway (5th from left) is shown hosting the Western Governors' Conference in Jackson in the summer of 1971, six months before the Wagon Wheel issue came to his attention. At Hathaway's right is then-Gov. Ronald Reagan of California.

test this rape of our Country. We feel that nuclear detonation is not the only answer to retrieving this natural gas.⁶⁶

Neither the AEC nor El Paso Natural Gas were represented at the initial meeting of the WWIC where more than 500 people gathered to learn more about Wagon Wheel. Floyd Bousman and Sally Mackey were co-chairs. It was mentioned during the meeting the AEC had admitted, "if Pinedale were more populated, the gas stimulation would not be economically feasible."⁶⁷

Shortly after the meeting, a local insurance agency used Wagon Wheel to their advantage. They placed an ad with the word "Wagonwheel" in bold print at the top: "THERE, WE'VE CAUGHT YOUR ATTENTION. Why not drop in to discuss your insurance?"⁶⁸

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation and the Green River Valley Cattlemen's Association called a meeting for April 29, with AEC and El Paso representatives. Reportedly, the meeting was well attended ("When the meeting got started...the gymnasium was perhaps a little more than half full but people continued to come in.") It went on for five hours.⁶⁹ Phillip Randolph, director of the El Paso Nuclear Group, (as well as several others from the company and AEC), assured residents there was "little potential danger."⁷⁰

Perhaps nothing shook the public confidence more than the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued in January 1972. The draft EIS contained a photograph of the well site during the drilling of the well. The document covered the background of Wagon

Wheel, probable environmental impact, "adverse environmental impact which cannot be avoided," as well as alternatives and "environmental effects of contemplated future action."⁷¹ The final EIS covered similar ground and included 91 pages of public comments and responses by the AEC.

Once the final EIS was released, few critics considered it complete or adequate.⁷² U.S. Senator Gale McGee (D-Wyoming) decried the EIS, claiming it, "was premature, failed to cover the overall impact, and failed to comply with some criteria laid out for the preparation of such reports."⁷³

Randolph agreed the EIS was premature as it "contained language that was alarming to the layman. ...the

⁶⁶ Birr, "Help on Wagon Wheel," (letter to the editor), *High Country News*, March 31, 1972, 15.

⁶⁷ "Little Support for Nuclear Project at Pinedale," *Casper Star Tribune*, March 23, 1972, 1. Selection of the chairs was noted in "Bousman to be on 'Today Show'," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 6, 1973.

⁶⁸ Plumme, *The Wagon Wheel Contention*, 117.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁰ "Meeting Told Wagon Wheel Danger Slight," *Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner*, May 2, 1972, 1.

⁷¹ Atomic Energy Commission, *Draft Environmental Statement: Wagon Wheel Gas Stimulation Project*, 1972, i.

⁷² The Associated Students of the University of Wyoming (ASUW) passed a resolution stating: "the AEC has not proved conclusively that radiation levels following the test would be safe, and alleged an AEC environmental impact study conducted on the project was biased and partial." See "Students would delay gas blast," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 18, 1972, 18.

⁷³ "McGee asks AEC revise evaluation," *Casper Star Tribune*, August 23, 1972, 27.

report was satisfactory to technical persons working in the field."⁷⁴ Whether or not Randolph was correct in his assessment of the EIS, it was followed by an announcement by El Paso that, "independent experts from Colorado State University are being engaged as a team of consultants to expand the bio-environmental studies already carried out."⁷⁵ However, the two experts, as well as the earlier EISs, were blasted in an article in the *Jackson Hole News*:

El Paso is only now being forced to undertake comprehensive studies to indicate the possible effects of their blast.

That would be fine, if the studies appeared a bit more objective. Buried in this week's announcement we find that Dr. Keith Schiager, a CSU radiation ecologist, is to be on the investigating team. Sounds impressive until you remember that Dr. Schiager was one of the few scientists at a meeting held last spring at Big Piney who spoke in favor of the Wagon Wheel project. Judging from this experience, can we expect Dr. Schiager to be objective?

Unfortunately, Dr. Schiager doesn't appear to be as much of a liability to the team as Dr. H. G. Fisser, range management expert from the University of Wyoming. According to the El Paso release, "Previous studies by Dr. Fisser and others ... have indicated that the project Wagon Wheel detonations will not have observable effects upon the ecology and environment of the area."⁷⁶

This study was not the only one to surface after the EIS was released. A report by professional biologists from the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife said "the location of the site should be re-evaluated with consideration for the possible 'adverse effects' it might have on fish in nearby streams."⁷⁷

In December 1972, the AEC announced that "information for a scientific decision on Project Wagon Wheel will not be available at least until late summer of 1974." AEC said it needed "continued scientific work in Wyoming ... before [it] could consider whether to proceed."⁷⁸ The actions by EPNG and the AEC did not appear to inspire confidence in the public.

El Paso and AEC also came under fire for their attitude toward area bridges and irrigation systems. Randolph said he "questioned whether it was the company's social responsibility to retain an engineering firm for 'a quarter of a million dollars' when only one or two ranchers use the bridge."⁷⁹ According to Randolph, four bridges were examined but,

Our big problem is — how do you be responsible? What is a socially responsible position? Crossing a bridge to that one man whose living is dependent on

crossing a river is damned important. Whether ownership is by the public or a private individual, we will seek a way to work with those people affected.⁸⁰

Technical studies noted in the EIS estimated the expected damage to be approximately \$65,000, including significant damage to a highway bridge about 5.5 miles away.⁸¹ In 1971, Dames and Moore, "a company nationally recognized for its competence in the field of applied earth sciences," conducted a study "to see if there would be an effect upon selected dams, reservoirs, canals, streams, buildings and other surface features as a result of an underground nuclear test."⁸² However, the study had overlooked irrigation systems.

Floyd Bousman, local rancher who was co-chairman of WWIC, lived ten miles away in Boulder, Wyoming. Bousman claimed the test would "destroy concrete irrigation structures on his ranch." Randolph said the motion would be four feet at the well, "but only one-eighth of an inch at Bousman's ranch."⁸³

Bousman, a commissioner of the Boulder Irrigation District, also objected to the EIS valuation of the Boulder Dam at \$150,000. The dam, built in 1965, cost over \$280,000 to construct, with an estimated replacement cost in 1973 of \$430,000.⁸⁴ The original EIS and technical studies by El Paso seemed inadequate, even to the company, as they saw fit to do additional study. In July 1972, a group was formed to inspect "all dams within 30 miles of the project location and all canals, control gates and siphons within 15 miles."⁸⁵

Dames and Moore returned during the summer of 1972. For an unstated reason, perhaps because they had

⁷⁴ "No Wagon Wheel Blast Possible In '73: EPNG," *Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner*, June 15, 1972, 1.

⁷⁵ "Biology experts to study 'Wagon Wheel'," *Casper Star Tribune*, August 15, 1972, 11.

⁷⁶ "This Week's Offering!" *High Country News*, Sept. 29, 1972, 3.

⁷⁷ "Wagon Wheel gets new questions," *Casper Star Tribune*, October 3, 1972, 1.

⁷⁸ "Wagon Wheel data is two years away," *Casper Star Tribune*, December 17, 1972, 17.

⁷⁹ "'Wagon Wheel' Blast Might Damage Bridges," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 13, 1972, 2.

⁸⁰ "Work force of 2,000 seen for Wagonwheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 14, 1972, 9.

⁸¹ Tom Bell, "Wagon Wheel — Mark of Progress," *High Country News*, March 31, 1972, 11.

⁸² "El Paso continues work on Wagon Wheel project," *Casper Star Tribune*, July 14, 1972, 13.

⁸³ Owen Frank, "Opinions Vary Widely On Wagon Wheel Blast," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 2, 1972, 8.

⁸⁴ *Statement of Opposition to Project Wagon Wheel*, (Pinedale, Wyoming: Wagon Wheel Information Committee, 1973), 11.

⁸⁵ "Irrigation impact of blast checked," *Casper Star Tribune*, July 27, 1972.



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Teno Roncalio served as Wyoming's only U. S. Representative from 1965-67 and 1971-79. A critic of nuclear stimulation, he was responsible for stopping funding for Project Wagon Wheel in Congress in 1973.

omitted irrigation systems, their earlier study was not adequate. They were asked to do a "more detailed study," taking into account comments from the AEC, county residents, and various federal and state agencies personnel.⁸⁶ Bousman wrote to the *Star Tribune*:

I am writing in regard to the recent press release by EPNG in which they list the dams, etc., which they are now going to study in conjunction with Dames and Moore, for possible damage from the Wagon Wheel Project.

I wonder how many people realize that these are all things that EPNG and the AEC, in their environmental statements said had already been done, when in fact they had not been done.

Is it any wonder there is such a large credibility gap?⁸⁷

WWIC continued opposition to the test throughout the fall. The organization conducted a "straw poll" during the 1972 general election. Although the vote had "no legal effect on the future of the planned nuclear detonations," the results indicated the strength of the opposition to Wagon Wheel.⁸⁸ Of the 1,670 people who voted in the general election, 1,230 chose to express an opinion about Wagon Wheel. "873 said they opposed Wagon Wheel, while 262 said they favored continua-

tion of the project. Ninety-five individuals had no opinion."⁸⁹

WWIC members, concerned that the straw poll results would be questioned, had the county sheriff's department collect the ballots. Two ministers counted them. U. S. Representative Teno Roncalio (D-Wyoming) said it appeared that El Paso would "not live up to promises that it wouldn't cram Wagon Wheel down the throats of Sublette County residents."⁹⁰

Pinedale resident Mildred Delgado wrote to the Casper newspaper, claiming that if one were to add the 501 people who did not vote, the 95 who were undecided and the 262 who voted in favor of Wagon Wheel, they would comprise 49.6 percent. Those who voted against made up just 50.4 percent. She pointed out that WWIC's choice for U. S. Congress, Teno Roncalio, had lost Sublette County to his Republican challenger, Bill Kidd, by a vote of 900-761.⁹¹

WWIC member Phyllis Birr responded quickly to the Delgado claim. "Since when do people who do not vote automatically register as a vote 'for' something?" she asked in her letter to the editor.⁹²

In December, officers of the WWIC sent a letter to El Paso officials, the AEC and members of the state's congressional delegation, requesting a meeting. The groups decided to meet in the Washington offices of U. S. Senator Clifford P. Hansen (R-Wyoming), in February, 1973. Birr, Bousman, and other WWIC members arrived in Washington on February 4. Cong. Roncalio had arranged for them to meet with representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency the next day, in addition to meeting with the AEC and El Paso representatives on February 7. Bousman also appeared on NBC's "Today" show to help publicize the opposition to Wagon Wheel.⁹³

⁸⁶ "El Paso continues work on Wagon Wheel project," *Casper Star Tribune*, July 14, 1972, 13.

⁸⁷ Bousman, "Credibility gap?" (letter to the editor), *Casper Star Tribune*, August 3, 1972, 5.

⁸⁸ "Take straw vote on Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, November 7, 1972, 11.

⁸⁹ "Straw vote opposes Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, November 9, 1972, 17.

⁹⁰ "Teno chides El Paso on 'promises,'" *Casper Star Tribune*, December 7, 1972, 17.

⁹¹ Delgado, "More 'realistic' account," (letter to the editor), *Casper Star Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1972, 3. The official count shows Delgado figures were slightly in error--the total was 900-766.

⁹² Birr, "Gross errors claimed," (letter to the editor), *Casper Star Tribune*, Dec. 22, 1972, 6. One other person wrote to refute Delgado's comments.

⁹³ "AEC meeting is scheduled," *Casper Star Tribune*, January 9, 1973, 9; "EPA-Wagon Wheel meeting Feb. 5," *Casper Star Tribune*, January 31, 1973, 11; "Bousman to be on 'Today' show," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 6, 1973, 9.

Even before the meeting, an AEC "official promised Wyoming citizens...he will ask the AEC head to consider making Project Wagon Wheel dependent on a citizen's referendum."⁹⁴ It turned out that Roncalio was a step ahead of the committee, pressing for change within the AEC.

While the exact date of Wagon Wheel's death is murky, the direct cause appears clear. Roncalio, a staunch opponent of Wagon Wheel, had tried unsuccessfully throughout the summer to cut funding from the AEC budget for the project. In January, 1973, the congressman was appointed by House Speaker Carl Albert to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. "I sought this post to give Wyoming a voice in atomic energy developments, ranging from the proposed Project Wagon Wheel....," Roncalio said.⁹⁵

Less than a week after his appointment to the committee Roncalio announced that the AEC budget for Plowshare programs did not "include funds for any test events in fiscal 1974." On the Senate side, Hansen pointed out that Nixon's budget "delayed Wagon Wheel until late 1977--at the earliest." He added that even if funds were restored by Congress for the fiscal year 1974 budget, it was "rather apparent that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) would impound those funds also."⁹⁶

Roncalio claimed that the more study made of Plowshare, the sooner it was going to end:

It appears to me that the more we study the entire Plowshare Program, the more it is doomed....I say that is because previous attempts at this type method have not been commercial.⁹⁷

In mid-May, 1973, Roncalio requested elimination of the \$3.8 million for nuclear stimulation from the AEC budget.

Despite years of research, including Projects Gasbuggy and Rulison, this technology has not produced one cubic foot of salable natural gas...the AEC should terminate this program and direct its attention to far more pressing needs in reactor programs.⁹⁸

Wagon Wheel already had been delayed by cuts in funding. Now, the entire concept of nuclear stimulation was about to be shelved. WWIC had succeeded in its goal. Wagon Wheel had been halted.

Even if it had not been stopped by Roncalio, Bousman believed the project would not have continued because the public opposition was too great. "The people were willing to organize a county-wide or even statewide referendum and devote ourselves all our lives, if need be, to end this thing," Bousman said.⁹⁹

The shaft drilled for the testing was used to test "massive hydraulic fracturing." Nuclear devices, however, were never used at the site of Project Wagon Wheel.

Wagon Wheel could be considered a case study of how people from outside of Wyoming have wanted to exploit the state for their ends and how local groups, such as the WWIC, can successfully oppose such actions. El Paso, as early as 1958, asked the AEC for assistance in extracting natural gas out of low-permeability sandstone formations near Pinedale, but contracts and publicity were not publically known for at least 11 years.

The threat of five nuclear detonations threw fear into a small community, inciting a group of ranchers and ecologists to join on a quest to stop the test of nuclear stimulation. Wagon Wheel was halted. The sword was not be a plowshare. It remained an unwanted implement of war.

⁹⁴ "Wagon Wheel vote to be considered," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 6, 1973, 1.

⁹⁵ "Roncalio loses fight to stop Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, June 10, 1972, 10; "Teno joins group on atomic energy," *Casper Star Tribune*, January 27, 1973, 12.

⁹⁶ "AEC budget has no test funds," *Casper Star Tribune*, January 31, 1973, 11; "Nixon budget delays Wagon Wheel plans," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 3, 1973, 7. The second article referred to \$2.7 million that had been impounded from Plowshare in fiscal year 1973. Impoundment is a procedure where the president directs funds appropriated by Congress not be spent. Such actions are for savings, not program elimination.

⁹⁷ "AEC budget has no test funds," 11.

⁹⁸ "Roncalio requests cutoff of gas stimulation money," *Casper Star Tribune*, May 22, 1973, 11.

⁹⁹ "AEC may drop Wagon Wheel," *Casper Star Tribune*, February 9, 1973, 11; Bousman, telephone interview by author, December 12, 1995.

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The Quest for Public Television

By Phil Roberts

In Wyoming, with the smallest population of any state and a tradition of individualism, one person can have a greater impact on change than in most other states. While the absence of entrenched special interests and a general acceptance of change were factors, it was the influence of specific individuals who caused Wyoming to pioneer women's suffrage, claim state ownership of water resources, and institute creative severance taxes.¹ And there are the cases where Wyoming is last among the states to institute change, often because no advocate champions the idea. Rarely has it been both ways. One such case was in the matter of public television.

Around the United States, not one public television station was broadcasting in September, 1951, when University of Wyoming President George ("Duke") Humphrey initiated the filing for the first public television station in Wyoming.² At the time, no television station of any kind operated in Wyoming and it would be an entire year before reception of any television signal was made in the state.³ An entire range of obstacles, some legal and political and others financial and philosophical, blocked his efforts and it wasn't until 1969, 18 years after Humphrey's retirement as UW president that public television finally came to Wyoming—not from a station in Laramie, but one in Riverton.

The story of Humphrey's efforts demonstrates another oft-stated truth about Wyoming—it seems that with some innovations, there is a "50-year lag."⁴ In a lightly populated state with minimal state government bureaucracy, affecting change should be relatively rapid. Nonetheless, as the story of public television points out, sectional rivalries, absence of private funding support, conflicts of inter-

est, and no particular reverence for higher education, struck out at innovation. The university, attempting to fulfill its education mission for the entire state, often met with active opposition and apathy.⁵ The quest for public television became ensnared in these tangles of politics.

¹ Actually, three individuals receive much of the credit for women suffrage: Territorial Gov. John A. Campbell, Territorial Secretary Edward M. Lee, and William Bright, the South Pass legislator who introduced the suffrage bill in the first territorial legislature. Dr. Elwood Mead strongly influenced Wyoming's water law. The 1966 gubernatorial candidate Ernest Wilkerson made the severance tax a centerpiece in his campaign. Later, the man who defeated him in that election, Stan Hathaway, influenced passage of the first severance tax in Wyoming.

² The first noncommercial educational television station was KUHT, Channel 8, Houston, Texas, which began broadcasting on May 12, 1953, with test patterns and with programming on May 25. Only two such stations were on the air by the end of 1953; eight more began broadcasting in 1954; and five more opened in 1955. James Day, *The Vanishing Vision: The Inside Story of Public Television*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 35-36; Joseph Nathan Kane, *Famous First Facts*. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1981), 659. It would not have been unprecedented for a non-profit broadcasting outlet to be the first in Wyoming. The first radio station in Wyoming, KFA Laramie, was a non-profit operation underwritten by Mrs. E. H. Harriman and the Episcopal Church. See Howard Lee Wilson, "Top of the World Broadcasts: Wyoming's Early Radio," *Annals of Wyoming* 43 (Spring, 1971), 5-52.

³ The first television programs viewed in Wyoming were broadcast from Denver on July 18, 1952, by KWGN, Channel 2. The first commercial station in the state, KFBC-TV Cheyenne, went on the air March 21, 1954.

⁴ Maurice F. Griffith to Dean John Marvel, Nov. 7, 1962, Box 178, Television file, UW Archives.

⁵ On the other hand, UW feared any rival. One of the earliest efforts for another four-year college in the state occurred in the 1890s when Lander tried for the "agricultural college." See Roberts, *Wyoming Almanac*. (Laramie: Skyline West, 1997), 415.

In early 1951, the Federal Communications Commission announced that it would propose to reserve television channels for 209 non-commercial educational stations in certain cities throughout the United States.⁶ The commission designated only one such channel for Wyoming—VHF Channel 8 in Laramie.⁷ In many respects, the designation seemed fortuitous for public television. In many major markets, the FCC designated less desirable UHF channels for educational broadcasting, allowing commercial interests to snap up the better UHF locations. At the same time, the FCC set aside commercial channels nationwide. Twenty allotments were made to Wyoming, five on the VHF band and 15 on UHF. One of the commercial assignments, UHF channel 18, was designated for Laramie.

In the beginning, the FCC split narrowly on the issue of whether to even authorize educational channels. Only four of the seven commissioners favored such reservations. Commission chairman Wayne Coy, skeptical that non-commercial channels would be utilized, said he would be looking for a clear and immediate response on the part of educational institutions showing that they intended to use television for educational purposes.⁸

UW President Humphrey acted swiftly, filing comments before the commission, pointing out that the UW would utilize Channel 8, but it "cannot file an application for the construction of a television station until it has received legislative authority to do so." Since the Wyoming legislature met in biennial sessions, such action could not be expected until the 1953 session. "It is impossible to give definite assurance to the Commission that the channel reserved for Laramie, Wyoming, will be used by the University."⁹

Commercial assault on public television began almost immediately. It was generally agreed that the UHF channels, 2-13, had greater value than VHF. Consequently, on May 7, 1951, Warren M. Mallory filed a counter proposal with the FCC on behalf of himself and a group of Cheyenne and Laramie businessmen, asking that Channel 8 be released for commercial use and Channel 18 become the educational station.¹⁰

Mallory's group withdrew their request a month later, but by filing the counter proposal, the group kept in play their request to withdraw Channel 18 and substitute a lower channel, either 3 or 5.¹¹

Later in the summer of 1951, Humphrey engaged engineer Mallory to draft a plan for the UW non-commercial station. Mallory recommended a 2,000-watt transmitter with the signal broadcast from a 500-foot-high tower erected on the university campus.¹² Humphrey asked a trustee subcommittee to endorse the proposal, but at least two trustees were uncomfortable about acting without the entire board.¹³

Part of their concern had to do with what was shown in Mallory's coverage map appended to the report. Depending on the tower location, the transmitted signal would range from some ten miles from Laramie to a maximum of less than 50 miles at the most favorable distance. Rock River and Centennial were at the outer edges of the more powerful broadcast range. The signal would not reach Cheyenne (blocked by the Laramie Range) and even Medicine Bow would be beyond range. "I do not believe the executive committee should bind the entire board in a matter involving so great an expenditure when apparently results north of the Union Pacific for years to follow would be limited," wrote trustee John A. Reed, Kemmerer.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the board did pass a resolution asking the FCC to assign Channel 8 to the university.¹⁵

The university report tried to counter the concerns from potential competing commercial operators about programming contents. The Humphrey-commissioned report stated:

The university hopes to broadcast three types of programs: 1. Strictly educational programs, i.e., courses for which college credit is given; 2. Educational-cultural programs, such as music, drama, literature, art, science, and social science; 3. Music and drama programs solely as entertainment. [An estimated] 80-90 percent of the television programs which would be originated by the University would be strictly educational or educational-cultural."¹⁶

To allay trustee concerns that the station would serve only Laramie, the report stated:

For complete accounts of the origins of public television nationally, see John Walker Powell, *Channels of Learning: The Story of Educational Television*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962); Robert Blakely, *To Serve the Public Interest: Educational Broadcasting in the United States*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979); and Day, *The Vanishing Vision*.

⁷ "Outline for Committee on Television, University of Wyoming," in Box 129, President's Files, University Archives.

⁸ Day, 31.

⁹ "Outline for Committee on Television," *ibid*.

¹⁰ Cited in "Outline...."

¹¹ "Outline...."

¹² Mallory affidavit, "Engineering Statement," in "Sworn Statement of the University of Wyoming, Pursuant to FCC Order of Hearing Procedure," FCC Docket Nos. 8736, 8975, 9175, 8976, Sept. 21, 1951, in Box 129.

¹³ University Archives: President's Files, Box 129, Telegram to John A. Reed, Kemmerer, and H. D. Del Monte, Lander, Sept. 20, 1951.

¹⁴ The map is in Warren Mallory, "Sworn Statement to the FCC," filed Sept. 21, 1951, p. 25, Box 129, President's files, University Archives. Reed's telegram response to Humphrey is in "Television," Box 129, University Archives.

¹⁵ Trustee's Minutes, Book X (1951), 1751.

¹⁶ "Sworn Statement...", 3.

Some of the proposed programs would be presented as live broadcasts, some as closed circuit broadcasts to class rooms upon the Campus, and some would be recorded on film for television release by other stations throughout the State. Thus a station of the University would become a part of the educational establishment of the State.¹⁷

Humphrey, anxious to see that the university become involved in television of some sort, wrote to a local radio broadcaster on Aug. 30, 1951. He inquired whether the radio operator would like to enter into a cooperative television venture.¹⁸ The record contains no response; apparently, the radio owner had no interest.

The university's television committee met sporadically through 1951 and into 1952. Humphrey, anxious to have a funding request ready for the 1953 legislative session, wrote to the director of the American Council on Education in June 1952: "I read the statements about the Joint Committee on Educational Television," Humphrey wrote. "We are making a careful study of the advisability of establishing television facilities at the University of Wyoming. I should like to have the information available on the work of the Committee."¹⁹

Humphrey recognized how profitable tie-ins with universities could be for commercial television stations, particularly in regard to intercollegiate sports. At the end of the year, Humphrey received a letter from Keeton Arnett, an official of Dumont Laboratories, complaining about the NCAA policy of restricting football broadcasts to the station offering the best deal. "It is not possible for us to arrive at a conclusion other than that extremely bad judgment has been used by the NCAA television committee, with the result that, not only the game of football, but the cause of education is suffering."²⁰

Humphrey wrote back a stinging reply taking issue with all of Arnett's statements. "If unrestricted televising of football games is permitted," Humphrey wrote, "within five years we will not have more than twenty-five or thirty teams in the United States. Such a practice would make strong teams stronger and weak teams weaker."

Humphrey knew he needed extensive engineering reports in order to make a strong case to the 1953 legislature. Consequently, the board of trustees gave him approval to hire an out-of-state engineering firm, Lutz and May, Consulting Engineers, of Kansas City. Bids for the engineering study also had been submitted by Mallory and from Cheyenne engineer William Grove. Grove was associated with KFBC Radio in Cheyenne, owned by Frontier Broadcasting Company, a firm in which university trustee Tracy McCracken held a majority stake.²¹

Just as the 1953 legislative session was opening, Lutz and May delivered the report. The results indicated that



George "Duke" Humphrey

television might not be as "affordable" as the Mallory report two years earlier had indicated. The firm pointed out, however, that "the cost of an educational television station represents an investment in the future of Wyoming which we can ill afford to forego and, perhaps, lose forever."

Apparently to avoid the criticism that the station would serve only Laramie, the Lutz and May plan shows a considerably expanded broadcast range. Their plan called for a 100-kilowatt transmitter with sufficient range to reach Cheyenne and almost to Fort Collins to the south and Wheatland to the northeast. Instead of a 500-foot tower and transmitter being placed on campus, Lutz and May recommended a site on Pilot Hill, east of Laramie, with a shorter 100-foot tower. The on-campus studio would be connected to it by microwave relay.²²

The plan included an extensive equipment list and floor plan for a two-story studio building containing state-of-the-art studios, offices and production rooms. Initial cost estimates were sobering: from \$362,582 to 638,022 and an annual operating cost estimated from \$129,800 to \$139,800.²³ Apparently unfamiliar with the traditional parsimony of the Wyoming legislature, the firm pointed out

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Humphrey to Richard Connor, KOWB Radio, Aug. 30, 1951, Box 129, President's Files.

¹⁹ Humphrey to Dr. Arthur S. Adams, June 27, 1952, "Television" file, Box 129, President's Files. For the activities of the committee, later the council, see Day, chap. 2.

²⁰ Keeton Arnett to Humphrey, Dec. 30, 1952, in "Television" file, Box 133, President's Files.

²¹ Trustee's Minutes, Box X1 (1952), 38, 52. Gove later was named general manager of KFBC-TV in Cheyenne.

²² Report, Lutz and May, Consulting Engineers, Kansas City, Jan. 27, 1953, "Television" file, Box 133, President's Files.

²³ *Ibid.*

that the costs compared favorably to stations already in the planning stages at Kansas State University, the University of Nebraska and other large Midwest institutions.

The one comparison to a commercial station, however, caused legislators to question the huge outlays. According to Lutz and May, KFBC-TV, the new station about to open in Cheyenne by Frontier Broadcasting, a firm controlled by UW Trustee Tracy McCracken, spent just \$238,600 for the 5.22 kilowatt channel 5 station and the firm estimated an annual operating cost of less than \$100,000.²⁴

Any hope for an appropriation died. Nonetheless, optimistic that the legislature would be more favorable two years later, Humphrey had to be satisfied with the Senate Enrolled Joint Memorial urging the FCC to continue to reserve Channel 8 for the University of Wyoming for another two years.²⁵ When Humphrey sent a copy of the resolution to Paul A. Walker, the new chair of the FCC, and asked him to extend the deadline for application to July 1, 1955, Walker replied: "I would very much hope and respectfully urge that the State of Wyoming not delay application for an educational television station in Wyoming for such an extended period. The pressures for the use of this channel for commercial purposes will be so strong that I very much fear that the State would find it more difficult two years from now to proceed with an educational station than at the present time."²⁶

Alarmed by Walker's letter, Humphrey wrote to each member of the Wyoming congressional delegation urging that they contact Walker and argue the university's case. U. S. Representative William Henry Harrison's response was typical. He promised to contact Walker and added, "I hope you will be successful with Channel 8."²⁷

Curiously, Humphrey, who had enjoyed considerable success in raising funds from private sources, did not seek television funding in that manner. KUHT, Houston, the first public TV station in the nation, benefited from the generosity of oil millionaire Hugh Roy Cullen, and the construction costs of the second station to open, KTHE

²⁴ *Ibid*

²⁵ Senate Enrolled Joint Memorial #12 of the 32d legislature, introduced by State Senators David N. Hitchcock (D-Albany) and R. L. Greene (R-Johnson), Feb. 16, 1953, and approved Feb. 25, 1953. *Wyoming Session Laws* (1953), 246, 289-290. For trustee action on the request, see Trustee's Minutes, Book XI (1953), proceedings for February 27.

²⁶ Humphrey to Walker (containing a copy of the Senate memorial), March 13, 1953, Box 133, President's Files; Walker to Humphrey, March 17, 1953, Box 133, President's Files, UW Archives.

²⁷ Harrison to Humphrey, March 19, 1953, Box 133, President's Files. See also Sen. Lester Hunt to Humphrey, March 23, 1953; and Sen. Frank A. Barrett to Humphrey, March 26, 1953, with similar assurances and comments, Box 133, President's files, UW archives.



UW Board of Trustees at the time of President Humphrey's initial request for public television, 1951.

Los Angeles, also was underwritten by an oilman.²⁸ These earliest sponsoring institutions though the sponsoring institutions, the University of Houston and the University of Southern California, showed that private funding was possible. Nonetheless, just as in other cases in Wyoming history, Humphrey relied on the legislature.²⁹

Nationally, the Joint Committee on Educational Television was advocating closer ties between educational institutions and commercial broadcasters. "Many school systems and colleges find it expedient, pending the construction of television stations designed exclusively for non-commercial educational telecasting, to seek and accept cooperative arrangements with commercial television broadcasters in their area in order to help the commercial broadcaster serve his public interest requirements and in order to permit the educator to expand the area and influence of the educational institution and to learn television skills," the committee wrote. The committee emphasized, however, that such arrangements "in no way constitute a satisfactory alternative to the operation of a non-commercial educational television station by an educational institution because of the essentially different objectives of the commercial broadcasters from those of the educators."³⁰ UW was to learn how divergent its objectives were when Humphrey initiated a deal with a Cheyenne station.

KFBC-TV in Cheyenne, went on the air March 21, 1954. It was the first TV station in the state of Wyoming. Hopeful that the 1955 legislature would act, Humphrey was nonetheless anxious for the university to begin working in television. Consequently, on Aug. 23, 1954, UW entered into a deal with Educational Television and Radio Center in Ann Arbor, Mich., for a series of educational television productions that would be run on a trial basis by KFBC-TV Cheyenne.³¹ The Michigan firm had advocated the tie-in with the commercial station: "Educational institutions may contract with commercial television stations for use of time providing there is no sponsor. Affiliated stations pay \$1,000 per year for five programs each week...." the firm's literature pointed out. To reimburse KFBC who was barred from selling advertising to pay for the series, Humphrey agreed to write to bankers in the Channel 5 viewing area, urging them to underwrite the weekly half-hour programs as a "public service."³² Apparently at Humphrey's request, a secretary contacted the director of the Michigan production firm and reported back to the UW president that: "The first one [series]...was something about government that I didn't quite catch. He said he did not think there was anything in it to offend the bankers," she memoed Humphrey.³³

In mid-September, KFBC-TV announced that the ten-part program called "Great Plains Trilogy" would be broadcast each Sunday afternoon from 3-3:30 p.m., as an edu-

cational program from the University of Wyoming. Station owner and UW Trustee Tracy McCracken wrote Humphrey asking how he wished to introduce the series.³⁴

The arrangement turned out to be a disappointment and when the educational film service sought payment for films that had been shipped beyond the initially committed ten-week series, Humphrey replied, noting that the University never wished to renew beyond the trial period. "Incidentally," Humphrey wrote bitterly, "I talked with the president of KFBC-TV [McCracken] yesterday and he said that the programs were not well received. I myself received only one letter about the programs," he wrote, adding, "I should be glad to have your reaction to this situation."³⁵

Dr. H. K. Newburn replied with criticism of his own. "We have had varying comments from the stations that have been operating under this plan," he wrote, pointing out that in nearly every case, the comments had been favorable. "I must say, however, that I believe your institution has given a good deal more responsibility for the operation of the program to the commercial station in Cheyenne than is usually the case." Newburn pointed to Nebraska, Iowa and New Mexico where commercial broadcasters were not given control over the educational broadcasts. "They have attempted to integrate the program very closely with university activities and thus have had a different setting relative to public relations and educational impact," he concluded.³⁶ With cancellation of the film series, the UW's weekly half-hour arrangement with KFBC-TV came to an end.

While the Wyoming plan remained stalled throughout the rest of the decade, public stations opened in neighboring states. University control, however, turned out not to be the pattern. On Jan. 30, 1956, after four years of plan-

²⁸ Day, 36-37.

²⁹ Wyomingites do not simply rely on the legislature in questions of funding. There is a tendency to look to the legislature as a "cure" for many economic problems that may be better solved through non-government means. This trait was discussed extensively by members of the Wyoming Public Policy Forum during deliberations in Laramie in 1993-94 in which this writer had the opportunity to participate.

³⁰ "Outline for Committee on Television, University of Wyoming," in "Television" file, Box 133

³¹ The Michigan firm would furnish materials to UW at \$1 per minute for half-hour shows. The university would be given seven program choices.

³² Copies of the letters and the mailing list are in "Television" file #106, Box 140, President's Files, University Archives.

³³ Undated memo, Box 140, President's Files.

³⁴ Humphrey to Tracy McCracken, Oct. 4, 1954, Box 140, President's Files.

³⁵ Humphrey to Dr. H. K. Newburn, Educational Television and Radio Center, Ann Arbor, Feb. 10, 1955, "Television" file, Box 140, President's files.

³⁶ Newburn to Humphrey, undated letter, "Television" file, Box 140, President's Files.

ning, KRMA-TV in Denver began operation under a license granted to Denver Public Schools. Organized by a consortium of about 125 cultural and educational organizations, the governing control evolved into a council of 26 area groups. Five years after its opening, the station's budget amounted to \$194,000, all but \$89,000 paid by the school district.³⁷

Wyoming, on the verge of pioneering public television, now found itself lagging most neighboring states. Nonetheless, Humphrey persisted. In 1961, Humphrey appointed a University Television Committee, to be chaired by John Marvel, Dean of the College of Education, to explore available options, but also to counter Scottsbluff businessman Terry Carpenter's request to designate Channel 8 for a commercial station in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Even though Carpenter later withdrew his FCC request, Nebraska Public Television was expanding statewide through five new outlets, including one in the Nebraska Panhandle capable to broadcasting into parts of eastern Wyoming.

Humphrey also was receiving pressures to support expansion of the Denver public station into Wyoming. When the UW president asked Denver electronics consultant Karl O. Krummel to provide an estimate of how the State of Wyoming could distribute public television via cable systems statewide, the answer was not one Humphrey wanted to hear. "'KRMA, the Educational TV station of the Denver School Board is now broadcasting on a regular schedule of approximately eight to ten hours per day and has excellent programming for your purpose,'" Krummel wrote. "It would seem natural for the State to utilize this signal rather than construct your own station and be faced with large operating costs associated with production and broadcasting."³⁸

In early 1962, the University Television committee reported to Humphrey that a statewide committee should be formed consisting of "key personnel from the University, the State Department of Education, the Educational Media Council, the Wyoming Education Association, the Community College Commission, and the North Central Committee."³⁹ The UW committee's other recommendations were equally timid, recommending "further study" of the costs and preparation of a survey in order to submit a grant request from the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The university committee also echoed Krummel's suggestion, recommending "that some type of control agreement may be made with the Educational Television Station in Denver, Colorado, to provide the bulk of initial programming for Wyoming residents."⁴⁰

More than a decade had passed since Humphrey's initial proposal, but few results except requests for more study had occurred. Marvel reported receiving newsletters from educational television committees in several states and a

conversation he had with a Newcastle broadcaster who had conducted a statewide ETV survey. "I would hope that the ETV Committee might request the establishment of a state ETV commission in Wyoming which could serve as the official state agency endorsed by the legislature and the Governor. It would seem to me that commission status would gain more recognition and would be in a better position to secure and administer funds, assign responsibilities, and coordinate state-wide programs," Marvel wrote.⁴¹

Getting Wyoming school districts involved in such an enterprise by establishing a statewide committee seemed just as difficult. Humphrey and the trustees authorized Marvel to solicit support from educators. "I wish we could generate more interest in ETV in Wyoming, but the 50-year lag may be working," replied Maurice F. Griffith, superintendent of Natrona County School District No. 2, in late 1962. Griffith was skeptical about the committee's prospects. "I have talked about the possibilities to several school men but there is little interest. A committee may be of little value until some of our school people begin to have some curiosity about the medium," he concluded.⁴²

Three weeks after he was sworn in as governor, former trustee Clifford P. Hansen received a letter from Humphrey urging appointment of a statewide ETV committee. He also passed on the UW Television Committee's suggestion that the governor initiate the meetings for the new group "because it would create more interest than if the University originated the meeting," Humphrey wrote. Recognizing the political realities, the president and the university were distancing themselves from promoting the idea of public television. The initiative would have to come from elsewhere.

Humphrey retired as UW president in 1964 and the leadership for public television soon passed to Maurice Griffith, superintendent of schools in Natrona County, who began a frustrating seven-year crusade to bring public TV to Wyoming. Despite his earlier skepticism about educators and their desires for supporting public TV, he called a meeting for January 10, 1964, inviting many administrators and teachers to explore possibilities for public TV.

³⁷ "KRMA Works on Small Budget But Turns Out Big Productions," Roundup: The Sunday Denver Post, July 23, 1961, 11.

³⁸ Krummel to Humphrey, July 24, 1961. "Television" file, Box 178, President's Files.

³⁹ Trustee's Minutes, May 25-26, 1962.

⁴⁰ "Recommendations by the University of Wyoming Television Committee," undated report to Humphrey. "Television" file, Box 178, President's Files.

⁴¹ Marvel to Humphrey, June 5, 1962. "Television" file, Box 178, President's Files.

⁴² Griffith to Marvel, Nov. 7, 1962. "Television" file, Box 178, President's Files.

At the meeting, Griffith was elected chair of the newly organized "Greater Wyoming Instructional Television" committee. He told the small group of attendees that Casper schools already were making extensive use of television. Most educational programs on the system were imported from KRMA in Denver, but each Tuesday afternoon, local programming for the educational channel originated at KTWO-TV studios in Casper. Paul Schupbach, representing the Great Plains ITV Library at the University of Nebraska, spoke to the group, made up mostly of educators, about the Nebraska system.⁴³

Soon after, Gov. Hansen wrote to Griffith, calling for another statewide meeting. Hansen invited Humphrey's successor, UW President John Fey, State Superintendent Cecil Shaw, and the owners of two commercial broadcasting companies, Jack Rosenthal of KTWO, Casper, and Robert McCracken, an officer in Frontier Broadcasting, owner of KFBC-TV, Cheyenne.⁴⁴ From this group came the impetus for a state-supported committee for ETV. Griffith and several others continued as volunteers, planning for a public television network, perhaps through utilizing existing broadcast stations and cable television systems, then coming on line in many Wyoming cities. The group decided to submit a plan for funding such a system to the 1967 Wyoming Legislature, along with a request to formalize the Wyoming ETV Commission.⁴⁵

Nationally, 1967 was a significant year for public television. Congress passed the Public Broadcasting Act, expanding support for educational television and creating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Congress also extended a 1962 act which had authorized \$32 million for "acquisition and installation" of equipment for educational television around the nation for five years. An appropriation of \$10.5 million was made for Fiscal Year 1968, \$12.5 million for FY 1969 and \$15 million for FY 1970. The legislation did have limitations. No one state could receive more than 8 1/2 percent of the total appropriation. But what would prove more significant to Wyoming, the maximum grant would be limited to 75 percent of the broadcast equipment cost, the rest coming as a match from state (or private) sources.⁴⁶

During the 1967 legislative session, Don Tannehill, a cable operator with connections to the ETV commission, and State Sen. Peter Madsen met with Governor Hathaway about how cable could interact with ETV. According to a later recounting of the meeting, the cable operators were instructed not to oppose ETV's request, even though many operators saw the plan as "unrealistic"—too expensive and the ten-year plan too unpredictable.⁴⁷ The legislature, apparently concurring with the assessment made by the cable operators, passed legislation formalizing the Wyoming Educational Television Commission as a state agency, but

it rejected the funding request proposed in a separate bill.⁴⁸

Griffith wrote to the other members about his disappointment with the 1967 session. "The legislature adjourned and we were unsuccessful in obtaining any funds for construction of a broadcast system," he wrote in February, 1967. "A bill to create a commission and funding for it was passed so there can be continuing work to develop a state system," he added.⁴⁹

Governor Hansen had been elected to the U. S. Senate in 1966 and his successor, Stan Hathaway, formally appointed the Wyoming Educational TV Commission.⁵⁰

⁴³ Weston Brooke was elected vice chairman; James Moore, secretary; and Robert Kilzer, treasurer. "Correspondence" folder, Wyoming Educational Television Commission files, Wyoming State Archives, Division of Cultural Resources.

⁴⁴ Hansen to Griffith, March 12, 1965. "Correspondence" folder, Wyoming Educational Television Commission files, Wyoming State Archives, Division of Cultural Resources. Hansen's informal committee eventually included: Griffith, chair; J. E. Christensen, Powell President of Northwest Community College and representing the Community College Commission; Mrs. Donna Connor, Rawlins, Wyoming County Superintendent's Association; Dr. John Gates, UW; the Rev. Jerome Louge, Cheyenne, representing the state's parochial schools; Leroy Meininger, Huntley, president of the Wyoming School Board Association; Jack Rosenthal, KTWO-TV who represented broadcasters; Don Tannehill, president of Big Horn Broadcast Company of Sheridan, representing Community TV Antenna Association and L. J. Williams, D. D. S., representing "the professions" in Wyoming. Others listed on letterhead of the committee included: Dr. Harry Broad and Dean Talegan, both from the State Department of Education; Marshall S. Macy, superintendent of schools in Newcastle; and James Messimer, Casper, president of the Wyoming Education Association.

⁴⁵ Prior to 1972, the legislature met for only 40 days biennially.

⁴⁶ Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, HR 6736.

⁴⁷ Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, May 23, 1968.

⁴⁸ HB 310, introduced on January 26, 1967, would have established an appropriation of \$822,000 for the ETV commission. A bipartisan group of legislators, Verda James, Harold Hellbaum, LaVerne C. Boal, June Boyle, Elton Trowbridge, Leon Keith, Arthur L. Buck, Bob R. Bullock and Marvin E. Emrich were bill co-sponsors. HB 142, establishing the commission did pass. Sponsors were James, Emrich, Bullock, Buck, Boyle, Keith, William S. Curry, Allen E. Campbell, Jo W. Stewart and Clyde W. Kurtz. "Legislation Folder, 1967-1968," Wyoming ETV Commission.

⁴⁹ Griffith to ETV Committee members, 20 February 1967. "Correspondence file," Wyoming ETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives. The act originated as HB 142, filed on January 17, 1967, and co-sponsored by several Natrona and Laramie county legislators, including Verda James who was to be House Speaker in the next session two years later.

⁵⁰ Griffith served as chairman; Bert Bell, vice chairman; W. F. Harrison, a Sheridan CPA, was the secretary. Other members were Robert Schrader, Dean Talagan, Pat Quealy and Warren Sackma, Cheyenne. Dr. Schrader, superintendent of schools in Cody, later was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Bill Grove, vice president of KFBC, Cheyenne, and Ben Lockard, chief engineer of KTWO, Casper, often appeared at meetings as representatives of the commercial stations. "Minutes of Meetings," Wyoming Educational Television Commission files, Wyoming State Archives.

Seven members were named to the commission, including Griffith. *Ex officio* representatives were chosen from two of the state's commercial stations and one member from UW (broadcasting professor John McMullen).⁵¹

After the legislative session, committee member Bert Bell contacted cable operators about utilizing their systems to disseminate UW programs—at least until July 1, 1969. Cable operators agreed, pointing out the need for additional microwave applications in order to handle the university's programs. The UW Board of Trustees would go to the legislature to get money to defray a portion of the cost, university officials told the cable operators. Technical problems meant the system would not start into operation until the fall of 1968, more than a year after the meeting. Nonetheless, such a partnership appeared to obviate the need for a statewide over-the-air ETV system.⁵²

At the commission's organizational meeting held in July, 1967, at Jackson Lake Lodge, the main discussion concerned choosing a transmitting method for Wyoming. The choice was between Nebraska's seven transmitter system or Utah's single-station hub system with 100-watt translators.⁵³ No longer was Wyoming leading in educational television. Both neighboring states had developed quite sophisticated educational television systems while nothing had been accomplished in Wyoming.

Dr. Ralph Molinari was appointed the executive secretary of the commission and introduced to members at the September 29 meeting on the UW campus. Board members, still divided on which transmitting approach to take, heard a presentation about the Nebraska system.⁵⁴ At the next meeting, held in Casper, a majority opted for the Nebraska method, but a subcommittee was authorized to travel to Utah to inspect that system and report back.⁵⁵

The decision came after significant differences of opinion were voiced. It wasn't until February of the next year, however, that the board authorized consulting engineer Tom Morrissey to proceed with engineering studies.⁵⁶

Public television by over-the-air transmission no longer had a clear field. Cable television was making inroads into Wyoming communities and households. Cable operators in Wyoming always expressed support for educational television in principle, but worried about signal distribution and the impact on their industry. The UW board of trustees, at the December 7 meeting, heard presentations from cable operators on using cable for adult education courses.

It was not the first meeting of cable operators and educators. They had been involved since at least September, 1961. In 1964, when the first Morrissey report on ETV was issued, cable operators saw potential for partnerships with education. "In April, 1965, all school could be attached to various cable systems free of charge," asserted Charles Crowell, legal representative of the operators, in

the presentation to the UW Board of Trustees. Cable was not universal throughout Wyoming, however. Their "reach" was to approximately 74 percent of the school-aged population.⁵⁷

ETV proponents were seeking a statewide network—"publically funded, administered and centrally-operated....free with no subscription cost."⁵⁸ The cable industry had different goals. The "partnership" arrangement set up through Bell's initiative the previous year ran into trouble. On March 4, 1968, UW President William Carlson withdrew the university's "program and policy statement" of cooperation with the cable companies. As a result, the cable firms withdrew microwave applications.⁵⁹ No explanation was given for the university's decision although, clearly, supporters of ETV were pleased with the result.⁶⁰

Representatives from the community antenna systems and cable companies met with the Wyoming ETV Commission on May 23 in Casper. There was "little accord at the meeting with CATV."⁶¹ The "lack of accord" was evident in the following exchange: Chairman Griffith asked the representatives: "Do you believe if ETV is made available from the CATV that the legislature would fund an ETV system?" The representative answered, "I don't know." Griffith then asked, "If the CATV people can provide assistance to ETV, would it do so?" The representative replied, "We'd be most happy to." But no details of "help" were asked or offered.⁶²

The ETV committee, meeting the same day, passed a resolution urging the University trustees to defer action on such proposals until such time as the "public television

⁵¹ The law required a party split, but also stipulated that the governor should take professional qualifications into account when making the appointments. See *Wyoming Stat.* 9-220.1 (1967).

⁵² Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives, June 28, 1968.

⁵³ Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Commissioners Bill Harrison and Bert Bell had met with the Nebraska ETV personnel. The next day, the commission adjourned to attend the UW-CSU football game held in Laramie.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* The commission heard reports of visits by two commission members to Cedar City and Salt Lake City.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, minutes of Feb. 12, 1968, held by conference call.

⁵⁷ Charles Crowell gave the estimate at the May 23, 1968, meeting of the Wyoming ETV Commission and the figure appears in the board minutes.

⁵⁸ Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, May 23, 1968.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ A few days later at the March 21 meeting in Cheyenne, Bell resigned and John McMullen, UW broadcasting professor, was named *ex officio* member of the board.

⁶¹ Quoting the May minutes, presented for commission approval at the June 28, 1968, meeting, Wyoming ETV Commission, June 28, 1968.

⁶² *Ibid.*, May 23, 1968.

issues are resolved."⁶³ The commission was divided on the issue, however. Bert Bell again stated he believed an alliance with cable would be beneficial. The rest disagreed.⁶⁴

Out-of-state public television was making inroads. Member Bill Harrison reported that Sheridan schools planned to carry programming from the Salt Lake City public TV station. Griffith noted that Casper schools were using KRMA-TV in Denver, brought to Casper on cable.⁶⁵

Griffith repeated concerns that the board lacked statewide support. The result was creation of an advisory board composed of one person from each county.⁶⁶

When the board met at Jackson Lake Lodge in June, Morrissey provided them with funding proposals. Each of the 50 translator sites would require a \$20,000 outlay. The main hub transmitter, tower building and other equipment would amount to some \$500,000. Morrissey gave figures of \$200,000 for the second hub with lower power and another \$300,000 for a central production center. In his view, "shared production facilities" utilizing black and white would cost \$100,000. The entire package was, at least in the view of some board members, staggering for its expense—\$2.1 million, with an annual operation cost estimated from between \$100,000 and \$400,000 depending on picture quality. Locations of the two hubs, one on the summit between Cheyenne and Laramie (channel 8) and the second on Casper Mountain (channel 6) were identical to those proposed in Morrissey's 1965 study.⁶⁷ "The rather large figure brought discussion of other methods of getting ETV to Wyoming people," the board secretary wrote blandly.⁶⁸

The commission majority asked Morrissey to provide a proposal for a "less costly system." By the second day of the meeting, the engineer presented an alternative plan. The scaled-back version would have half as many translators (25), just one main transmitter, a less expensive building, and a "no-color production center." Total cost of the alternative would be an estimated \$950,000, according to Morrissey.⁶⁹

Clearly, Morrissey's pared down plan would mean lesser signal penetration in the state. When the board met the next month, the majority decided to propose Morrissey's initial, more extensive (and expensive) plan for legislative approval.⁷⁰ Apparently, most believed matching funds might be utilized for the project, likely from the federal government.

At the same meeting, the board commissioned a public opinion survey, to be conducted by the State Department of Education during the summer of 1968. The results were encouraging. Approximately 84 percent of the respondents said they favored public television in Wyoming, even though a surprising number had not heard of the proposed

plan and few knew the exact form of transmission.⁷¹

Armed with the positive poll results, the commission asked Sackman to draft the proposed legislation for the system. Molinari and Bob Smith (hired to do public relations for the commission earlier that year) were asked to assist. Gov. Stan Hathaway, State Supt. of Public Instruction Harry Roberts and Jack Fairweather also attended the meeting. Hathaway told the commission he would endorse the concept "but not the specific plan." He said he thought the commission should ask for no more than \$500,000 and then seek a matching commitment elsewhere before the legislature convened.⁷²

Griffith wrote to U. S. Rep. William Henry Harrison (R-Wyoming) about helping the commission gain federal funds. Harrison responded that no funds for ETV had been appropriated for 1968. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare had requested \$12.5 million for 1969, but the House had authorized just \$4.5 million. The Senate had not acted on the bill. Harrison added that Wyoming would be ineligible for such funds at any rate because the ETV Commission "had not applied for a construction permit." Harrison added that even if the commission's plan for a \$1 million bond sale were approved by the legislature, HEW "would have to wait until the money was in hand."⁷³

In October, Griffith received similar bad news from the director of HEW's Educational Broadcasting Facilities Program. There were "74 applications filed and \$33 million requested," Raymond J. Stanley reported. With just \$4 million available and a state limitation of just \$340,000, federal funding seemed out of the question.⁷⁴

⁶³ Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, Dec. 7, 1967.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Minutes of Meetings, Wyoming ETV Commission, Feb. 12, 1968.

⁶⁶ Minutes of Meetings, WETV Commission, Feb. 12, 1968.

⁶⁷ T. G. Morrissey, "Educating with Television in Wyoming: A Feasibility Engineering Study," (Cheyenne: State Department of Education, UW and Community College Commission, 1965); "Wyoming ETV Finalization of System Plan and Cost Estimates," (Denver: T. G. Morrissey, Consulting Engineer, n.d.), intro.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* See also Meeting minutes, Wyoming ETV Commission, June 28, 1968. Morrissey's report is included with the minutes as well as in a separate folder.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Meeting minutes, Wyoming ETV Commission, July 11, 1968, held at Little America, Cheyenne.

⁷¹ Survey, June, 1968, in "Correspondence file," WETV Commission. Curiously, just 36 percent of those polled had heard about the ETV proposal; 66 percent had not. Only 2.3 percent of those polled did not own a television set; 32 percent were cable subscribers while the other two-thirds received signals from antennas.

⁷² Meeting minutes, Wyoming ETV Commission, Sept. 18, 1968.

⁷³ Harrison to Griffith, n.d., in ETV Legislation file, Wyoming ETV Commission.

⁷⁴ Raymond J. Stanley to Griffith, Oct. 25, 1968, ETV Legislation file, Wyoming ETV Commission.

Earlier that summer, Hathaway's attorney general's office reported that funding and authority to establish a statewide system through the ETV commission would expire the next June, according to the enabling legislation passed in 1967. "I believe this is our last chance to act," Griffith told other commission members. "If the Wyoming State Legislature does not establish an Educational Television system for our state during the 1969 session, I am afraid that our state will not be able to build an ETV system because of the unavailability of federal matching funds."⁷⁵

The board was still torn between a centralized system and one operating a series of transmitters. Based on what they perceived as broad public support, the group hammered out a proposal to establish a statewide system, but with several alternatives having various price tags. On Dec. 12, 1968, Gov. Hathaway proposed that the board submit one bill for legislative approval rather than one enabling act and a separate appropriation bill. After changes were made to the draft and the two bills merged, Molinari submitted the bill for member approval on December 18. Along with authorization of a system, the bill called for \$20,000 for commission operations and \$500,000 for a funding match, the source of the match not yet determined.

An Associated Press report distributed statewide on December 31 gave the commission members pause. In it, the writer quoted various legislators about their views on public television. Clearly, the cost figures, reported by AP to be at least \$1 million, brought significant opposition from several key legislators.⁷⁶ Griffith and other commission members were furious that the high figure had been cited without noting that the legislature was being asked for only half of it. A possibility existed for matching funds, they believed, and the article never mentioned it.⁷⁷

Gov. Hathaway, in his State of the State address to the legislature, spoke out in favor of the ETV system:

Educational television can no longer be considered a luxury. It is an invaluable classroom aid and provides a medium for adult education and advanced vocational-technical training. Wyoming is now one of only two states that do not have an educational television system. I recommend that the legislature approve and fund the first phase of a plan that will, with the assistance of federal funds, provide an educational television system that will serve all of the people of Wyoming.⁷⁸

The legislature did not pass an appropriation for a statewide system. Without the state funds, the future of ETV was cast into doubt once again.

Griffith sent a memo to the rest of the commission members on March 4, 1969, calling a meeting—"perhaps the last"—for later in the month. He wrote that the group would "consider possibilities for organizing a system with-

out use of state funds."⁷⁹ Following the meeting, Griffith spoke with Governor Hathaway. "He gave approval to private fund-raising," Griffith later wrote to his colleagues.⁸⁰ In one last desperate act to gain financial support for such a network, Griffith wrote to the Ford Foundation. "The recounting of the multitude of problems in getting public broadcasting distributed throughout Wyoming...would be too long for an exploratory letter such as this," he wrote, adding that factors of distance and small population were significant.⁸¹

Funding for the commission ended on June 1, 1969. The structure remained in place in the statutes until 1994 when the State Telecommunications Council was created, taking over what had been some duties of the commission.⁸²

On May 10, 1983, KCWC-TV, the first public television station in Wyoming, went on the air, broadcasting from studios on the campus of Central Wyoming College, Riverton. Wyoming barely escaped being the last state in the union to establish public TV. KCWC filed with the FCC just months before the public TV station in Montana.⁸³

The Riverton station came into being despite repeated legislative refusals to fund public TV. The initiative, led by CWC officials, was not without controversy.

After the legislature defeated funding for such a station, CWC President Bob Barringer recruited a handful of political supporters, including Gov. Ed Herschler and State Sen. Roy Peck, a Fremont County Republican. With their

⁷⁵ "Proposed Wyoming ETV Network," (pamphlet), 1969, in Wyoming ETV Commission files, Wyoming State Archives.

⁷⁶ A teletype paper copy of the AP release, written by Bob Leeright, is in commission files. "Correspondence file," WETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives. In August, 1968, a statewide advisory committee was selected with members from every county in the state. Their role in lobbying and support is not clear from the record.

⁷⁷ The state budget picture was unhealthy in 1969, tax revenues not keeping up with demands. It was in this session that the legislature authorized the first severance tax on minerals, a measure destined to keep the state's fiscal condition healthy until the 1990s.

⁷⁸ "Text of State of the State Address," Casper Star Tribune, January 16, 1969, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Griffith to commission members, 4 March 1969, "Correspondence" file, WETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives.

⁸⁰ Griffith to commission members, 4 April 1969, "Correspondence" file, WETV Commission, Wyoming State Archives.

⁸¹ Griffith to Dr. Ed Meade, Director, Ford Foundation, 24 April 1969, in "Correspondence" file.

⁸² Statutory authority for the commission was in Wyoming Statutes (1977), 9-220.1 through 9-220.6. The 1982 renumbering changed the citation, but not the language. W.S. 9-2-501 et seq. The current statute authorizing the State Telecommunications Council is W. S. 9-2-1026.2.

⁸³ Kathleen Sutton, "Public TV Comes to Wyoming," *Capitol Times* (Cheyenne), June 1983, 12.

help, CWC was able to resist an attempt by a commercial station in Casper to remove the Channel 4 designation from the FCC non-commercial category. Gov. Herschler sent his own representative to appear before the board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to testify for the Wyoming public station.⁸⁴

Having won the battle to keep the channel, the college turned toward gaining support for building the station. Barringer, whose term at the college lasted barely a year, had been replaced by Richard St. Pierre, but the successor continued the quest.

Federal funds, under the Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, were available for such a station, but they required a matching appropriation. To most, it seemed highly unlikely that the legislature would authorize such a match. St. Pierre bypassed the legislature and boldly allocated \$325,000 from the college's funds. Soon, the PTFP federal match of three times that amount—\$976,000—was granted. It was the largest federal grant made to start a public television station and CWC became the only community college in the world holding a VHF TV station license.⁸⁵

KCWC-TV, however, was far from the statewide system envisioned by Duke Humphrey in the 1950s. Repeated

attempts to form a state telecommunications authority were defeated by the legislature throughout the early 1980s. State Sen. Peck introduced bills in 1980 and 1982 to establish such an entity, but each time, they were defeated.

Nonetheless, Humphrey's dream of public television finally came to pass. It hadn't been a "50-year lag" as Maurice Griffith once bitterly predicted, but his estimate was close. Thirty-two years after Humphrey's proposal to make Wyoming the first state with public television, Wyoming finally became the 49th state to have such a channel.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Sutton, 12-13. According to Sutton, St. Pierre came under fire from his own college for making the appropriation to public TV, eventually resigning after receiving a no-confidence vote from the faculty.

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Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

Black Gold: Patterns in the Development of Wyoming's Oil Industry. By Mike Mackey. Powell: Western History Publications, 1997. vi + 160 pages. *Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, \$9.95.*

Few would deny the profound influence Wyoming's oil industry has had on the political, social and economic development of the state. However, the evolution of that industry has been fraught with problems not often experienced by oilmen and companies closer to eastern markets and distribution centers. Those problems and some of the people who attempted to overcome them are the focus of Mike Mackey's book.

The potential of Wyoming's oil reserves was recognized as early as the 1880s after the first successful well was drilled near Lander. Succeeding decades would see a variety of development and marketing strategies used by would-be and established developers. Mackey uses a

series of short stories to acquaint the reader with these developers and the methods they used, the positive and negative influences of the federal government, and the resources available to large eastern oil companies ultimately responsible for getting most of Wyoming's oil to market.

Mackey's study of independent oilmen range from Cy Iba, whose family spent 20 years filing claims in the Salt Creek oilfields, to Glenn Nielsen, who developed the Husky Oil Company. Iba worked in the hope he could someday lease his claims to large companies with the money to develop them. Through hard work, Nielsen created a very successful oil company only to have it bought out from under him by large Canadian oil interests backed by the Canadian government.

Mackey's survey of government influence on Wyoming's energy industry includes an examination of the Maverick Springs oilfield on the Wind River Reservation where federal inaction let the field lie idle for more than two decades. A look at the construction of

Cheyenne's aviation fuel plant near the end of World War II and the role of Wyoming's senior senators in bringing the plant to Wyoming paints government intervention in a more positive light. The book's final chapter traces the government's pursuit of the unpopular Plowshare program in the 1970s which was intended to concentrate natural gas by the detonation of underground nuclear bombs. While the final chapter is not directly linked with the development of Wyoming's oil industry, it serves as a recent example of the potentially disastrous effects misguided government actions can have on the West's energy industry.

Nearly all of the examples in *Black Gold* show a recurring theme - in the Wyoming oil business, hard work and being the first to discover oil in the field have not been as important as having huge financial reserves and government connections. Large companies with enough capital to develop and market Wyoming oil have dominated Wyoming's oil industry for most of its history, and they have generally left little room for the independent oilmen.

This book will be of interest to any student of twentieth century Wyoming history. The use of short case studies to draw attention to the diversity of situations experienced by developers makes Mackey's work very readable and digestible. The author refers to his book as a "slim volume," which it is, and the book is by no means a definitive exploration of Wyoming's oil industry. However, it provides good, basic insight into the types of people, processes, and governmental influences that shaped Wyoming's oil industry and will serve well as a springboard for further exploration into the subject.

Jim Allison
Wyoming State Museum

The Archaeology of the Donner Party. Edited by Donald L. Hardesty. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1997. xii + 156 pages. *Illustrations, tables, maps, notes, bibliography and index.* Cloth, \$27.95.

One aspect of the overland migration of the mid-nineteenth century that continues to hold historians' (both professional and avocational) attention is the Donner Party. There are and will continue to be many unanswered questions as to why the party suffered as it did, and the standard historical records, to some extent, will never provide the answers. This book presents recent archaeological investigation conducted by the University of Nevada-Reno at the reported Murphy Cabin (as marked by a bronze plaque in Donner Memorial State Park) and the Alder Creek locations in 1984 and 1990 respectively and

investigations of the reported Alder Creek location for the George and Jacob Donner families in 1992 and 1993.

Many research questions were addressed during the various phases of field work and are discussed in great detail: is the Murphy Cabin correctly located; exactly where was the Alder Creek camp; how many shelters were present in the camp and how were they spaced relative to each other; did cannibalism actually occur at any of the camps; what was the material culture left behind when the camps were abandoned and why did some members of the party die while others survived.

The book begins with a historical review of "The Donner Party Saga" detailing the background of the various families in the party, events that happened along the trail before the Sierra Nevada was reached, what happened at the winter camp, and how the survivors were rescued. Much of this information has been previously presented in other publications but not in the context of background information for archaeological investigations. Those familiar with the events will enjoy this review.

The second chapter, "The Donner Party and Overland Emigration, 1840-1860," puts the Donner party trip into the context of what was happening along the emigration trails. There was more to making the overland trip than just a desire to have new farm land in Oregon or to get rich in the gold fields of California. People could not just decide to go and leave their homes but had to carefully decide when to leave, what to take along, which route to take, and who to take along. The Donner Party had troubles from the start, and one could argue they were an ill-fated party from the beginning of the trip.

"Archaeology of the Murphy Cabin" and "Archaeology of the Alder Creek Camp" are the next two chapters. The Murphy Cabin excavations (conducted in 1984) definitely determined that the location as marked in the state park is that described by the various journals and diaries of the Donner Party. Recovered artifacts and structural remains provide much information as to how the Donners lived, interacted, and survived during their ordeal. The excavations also revealed the cabin site was *not* the location for the mass grave of people who perished at the camp. The mass grave was supposedly dug in the interior of one of the cabins, which later burned. This is not felt to be the "Breen Cabin," whose location remains unrecorded and may even have been destroyed by early twentieth century investigations at the site.

The Alder Creek Camp location was investigated in 1989-1993. These investigations were more problematic because the exact location for the camp was not known. Historical documents do not provide a single location but several possibilities, and researchers discuss all possible sites (pp. 57-60).

Similarly, historical records do not state the number and type of shelters at the Alder Creek Camp. Up to three tent locations and two other shelters may have been present. These structures would have left less archaeological evidence than that possible at the Donner Cabin site. Two locations, the "Jacob Donner Locality" and the "George Donner Locality," which had been previously identified and interpreted by historians, were excavated in 1989 and 1990 and contained primarily twentieth century artifacts or prehistoric Native American materials.

A systematic metal detector survey in 1990 across the adjoining meadow, followed by archaeological excavations, revealed that two locations, "The Meadow Locality" and "The Anthill Stump Locality," contained artifacts dating from the Donner Party period. The Meadow Locality is interpreted to be a trash dump. Based on the collected evidence, the Alder Creek meadow appears to have been where the Jacob and George Donner families camped.

Chapter 6 describes nineteenth century artifacts recovered during the various excavations beginning with a discussion of the materials known to have been in the Donner Party baggage, such as tableware, glassware, firearms, clothing and other personal gear, tobacco pipes, hand tools, and wagon hardware. The discussions are excellent, but the only problem is the lack of a photographic scale in the figures.

The final chapter, "New Directions in Donner Party Research," reviews the archaeological investigations, discusses the original research questions that were, were not and could not be answered, and more importantly, where research in the Donner Party winter camp should be directed in the future.

The book concludes with three appendices: "Zooarchaeology of the Murphy Cabin Site," "Ceramics from the Alder Creek Camp," and "The Timing of Donner Party Deaths." These provide details for many of the conclusions made in the main portion of the book.

This book is recommended for any researcher interested in the overland migration of the nineteenth century and how archaeology can help proving and disproving historical interpretations. Archaeological data often can provide detailed information about historical events and tell us more about what happened to people and why than historical documents can. The studies presented about the Donner Party are an excellent example of how archaeology works with history.

Danny N. Walker
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Tales and Irreverencies of a Country Parson. By Eugene F. Todd. Cheyenne: Western Americana Publishing, 1997. xix + 560 pages.

The Rev. Eugene F. Todd, retired Episcopal priest, knows how to tell a good story. In *Tales and Irreverencies of a Country Parson*, Todd has told us the story of a Wyoming ranch kid, Baptist pastor and Episcopal priest. He tells that story with relish, grace and style. As an autobiographical account, Todd holds center stage for the majority of the stories, but what stories he tells! He knows how to bring the reader into his life and to care about what he reads. In the manner of a good storyteller, he tells just enough, then moves on to something else just before the reader gets tired of the topic. Along the way, Todd recounts his very interesting and eventful life in the Rocky Mountain West.

The book begins and ends with a drowning. In the first, in 1930, young Gene Todd, then about two, fell into Piney Creek and was rescued by his family, unconscious but still breathing. He quickly recovered, and lived to tell many tales. The second ended tragically, with the drowning of his two-year young grandson in 1995, just as he completed the book. As a literary device, it provided perfect bookends. The reality of the personal tragedy brought tears. Todd's storytelling abilities brought tears on a number of occasions, but far more often it brought laughter, as he described the events of a life viewed through a lens of wry humor and, to borrow his term, irreverency.

Todd tells about his early life on a Wyoming ranch. Born July 1, 1928, on Big Piney Creek, he began life on a family ranch that was doing well. His father had even bought a gasoline-driven Ford tractor, the first in the neighborhood. All that changed soon, as a fire destroyed the ranch. The family rebuilt, but the Great Depression soon struck, bringing the Todd family the sorrows it brought so many others. Todd grew up a solitary boy, given to going of alone to watch nature, and also to migraine headaches. Although he didn't identify them as such as he grew up, they played an important part in his life, until he finally received successful treatment for them in 1987.

Although religion has played a pivotal role in Todd's life, he was not raised in a "religious" household. He began to sense a call to the ordained ministry while he attended the University of Denver. His first call, he felt, was to a military career, but that was not to be, and eventually he was ordained in the Baptist church. He served congregations in small Colorado communities, and later served as Baptist chaplain at the University of South Dakota. During that time he also began to feel drawn to

the Episcopal Church. When he finally answered that call, he decided to become an Episcopal priest, and to pursue that calling in Wyoming. After a year of Anglican Studies at the Virginia Theological Seminary, Todd was received into the ordained ministry of the Episcopal Church. He served congregations in Green River and Cheyenne until his retirement in 1992, after which he pursued college teaching and interim ministry in Colorado.

Without going into the details of an interesting and active life, let me simply return to my first assertion that Gene Todd tells a good story. He involved himself with the people and issues that have filled the decades of the sixties, seventies, and eighties, civil rights, hippies, the sexual revolution, AIDS, and he includes stories of meeting such famous individuals as Martin Luther King and George McGovern. The institutional church has also taken many hits during these decades, and Todd has played a part there, too, with forays into ecumenism, charismatic renewal, fundamentalism, even taking on the Billy Graham Crusade, which gained him a lot of publicity.

Many of Todd's stories come from his twenty-seven years as parish priest in St. Mark's, Cheyenne. For Wyoming, St. Mark's is a large church and Cheyenne is a

large city and of course the state capitol. Todd regales us with tales about many of the characters who formed his parish, tales filled with warmth and humor. From governors to street people, Todd brings them to us, and such in a way that we care to know about them. While Christianity can bring out the best in people, parish life can certainly bring out the worst as well. Todd's stories of trying to raise money for building renovation, turf-battles with individuals and vestries, and all the other day-to-day matters that fill any institution's life ring all too true. One needn't be an ardent Episcopalian or even affiliated with a church to recognize the people and events he recounts. He describes them in a way to keep the reader chuckling most of the time, with an occasional tear slipping in along the way. Rather like real life.

Tales and Irreverencies of a Country Parson reminds me a lot of living in Wyoming. Some of it seems improbable, much of it seems ludicrous, but through it all there runs a joy and a reality that fascinated me. Like any good storyteller, Todd kept me coming back for "just one more story."

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The antelope, raised on the Pitchfork Ranch near Meeteetse, is being fed by Margot and Annice Belden, daughters of the photographer Charles Belden. The photograph was made about 1925. Belden's antelope were sent to zoos throughout the United States.

Some even made their way to Germany aboard the Graf Hindenburg. His photographs appeared in the most popular magazines of the first third of the century. Belden collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Autumn 1998

Vol. 70, No. 4

IAN 22



About the Cover Art

"Bird's Eye View, Thermopolis, Wyo."

"Bird's eye view" picture postcards of Wyoming towns were commonplace in the first years of this century. This particularly fine example was photographed by George W. Herard of Thermopolis and printed by Newvochrome in Germany.

The exact identity of the sender is not known, except that her first name was "Dora." The message on the back of this card which was addressed to "Miss Julia Willson, 182 Lafayette St., Salem, Mass.," read: "Doody dear you will think I am not going to write to you but I am this very day and send you this card besides. It is not so good as some I have had as it does not show much of the town. Lovingly, Dora"

Monument Hill is pictured in the background, right. The Hot Springs are directly below it in this photograph.

The postcard in the collection of Steven L. Roberts, Thornton, Colo.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Herding Chickens on a Wyoming Cattle Ranch

By Amy Lawrence

My first encounter with ranch livestock was a face-to-face confrontation with three Bantam chickens. This all came about because my grandfather (Axel Palmer), had bought the old Herrick Ranch on the Little Laramie and asked Dad to manage the ranch. Mother and Dad (William H. "Bill" and Rena Lawrence) had been ranch raised, but since Dad's family had lost their ranch in the cattle market crash of the 1920s, he had been forced to accept whatever work he could find. Eventually we had ended up in California, the "Land of Golden Opportunity," but ranching was all Dad ever wanted to do, so we headed back to Wyoming.

Our "prairie schooner" was a newly purchased Model A truck, dubbed "Greenie" (among other things), and after considerable family arguments and endless packing and re-packing, Dad finally had all our belongings loaded and we were ready to "head 'em out." Just before we left, a close friend of my mother's presented me with a "going-away" gift of the three tiny chickens in a crate. My eight-year-old self was delighted, but Dad, realizing that these alarmed—and noisy—little birds had to be fed, watered and protected from weather during the trip, was, to put it mildly, "fit to be tied." In the face of my tears and Mom's "look," he had no choice. He added the crate to the top of the load.

So we headed back to a Wyoming ranch. As we ground slowly eastward, I had visions of "riding the range" on a wild stallion with my long blond hair streaming in the wind. That vision never materialized but I was heading into a wonderful, adventurous childhood of growing up on a ranch. Ranching in the 1930's was not exactly pioneering but rural living in the years before the REA and without modern equipment, retained many "old time traditions." So I had much to learn, not only about cowboying, but especially about chickens....

The important role that the lowly chicken played in ranch tradition and ambiance is often overlooked by historians. There is a general belief that ranchers lived on beef and little else but that was not always true, especially for small outfits like ours in the "BF" (before refrigeration) era.¹ With only an ice box for cooling, a whole or half beef had to be eaten within a short time or the balance had to be thrown away, laid down in salt brine or dried.

Consequently, the only easily available fresh meat was often provided by a flock of chickens, and the fresh eggs were a primary ingredient for such essential gourmet pleasures as fried eggs or chocolate cakes. In the earlier settlement period of the West, chickens in the yard were usually an indication that there was a woman in the household. Cowboys were known to ride considerable distances for the possibility of sampling a piece of cake or other delicacies. Eggs sometimes sold for a dollar each—so it is obvious that chickens were an essential element in domesticating the West.

Grandma and Mom could turn out "never-to-be-forgotten" fried chicken and they could also make an old stewing hen with dumplings a meal to remember. But chickens do not jump into the pot ready to cook, and the prelude to getting that succulent chicken on your plate involved a lot of work, some of which was downright disagreeable. Although Mom and Grandma were actually fond of their chickens and tended them carefully, the rest of the family were at best indifferent and regarded them as a noisy, messy nuisance. Chickens are silly creatures, frequently involved in some sort of

¹ Home refrigeration was not available on most ranches until the 1940's when REA brought electricity to rural areas. Fresh meat in markets and the rancher's own frozen meat in "locker plants" was a considerable drive away—over dirt roads.

crisis from mites² to skunks and the most dreaded job on many outfits was "cleaning the chicken house."

But their very foolishness made these birds comical and neither my little dog, Mickey, or myself could refrain from occasionally "stirring them up" just to hear them squawk. Grandma had lectured me sternly on the subject, explaining that such excitement disturbed the chickens lifestyle to such an extent that they might quit laying. So I indulged in this pastime only when the flock happened accidentally to be directly in my path, which was fairly often. Mickey, a little brown and white terrier mix, had no such inhibitions and was particularly adept at ambushing these unsuspecting fowls.

The chickens had free run of the yard and pasture, and were usually not penned up in the day time, because Grandma maintained they "did better" when they could roam in search of bugs and other goodies. Since we kept the grain in a back room of the house, they usually wandered that way at some time during the day, and to do this they had to pass a shady corner of the house where Mickey waited. When they were close enough, he'd pounce on them, throwing the birds into a squawking frenzy while feathers flew in all directions. By the time Grandma could make it to the door with the broom, Mickey was safely out of reach, innocently swaggering away, satisfied and happy.

Grandma would retreat indoors, muttering dire threats. I hadn't taught the dog to do this, but I must admit that when I saw him lying in wait by that corner,

I did not bother him. I even hung around to watch the commotion. Mickey never offered to actually harm the birds, but sure enjoyed disturbing their dignity.

In later years my cow horse, Shotgun, discovered the same pastime. Mom, Dad and I had moved to an adjoining ranch, and occasionally, Shotgun, who, like most saddle horses, had a sure instinct for an open gate, would get in the yard. He'd hide in the shade at the end of a row of sheds, cautiously peeking around the corner about the time Mother fed the chickens. When Mom would call her flock to their dinner, he would trot out, scattering chickens in all directions, to grab a few nibbles of corn. By the time Mom had shooed him away with apron flapping and shouted warnings, chickens would be scattered all over the yard. Then Shotgun would trot away, head high in triumph and Dad or I would be drafted to run him out of the yard amid frightful threats to the safety of the culprit.

Grandma's chicken flock included a nasty white rooster with whom I had a standing feud. He was a big, arrogant fellow with a vivid red comb, a high, proud tail and long, sharp spurs. It was a considerable distance between the barns and the house and he'd lay in

² Mites were tiny bugs that infested the flock occasionally. This meant a thorough dusting with mite powder, which came in a little yellow cardboard box, shaped somewhat like a pear which you squeezed to spray powder on the chickens. Each chicken had to be caught and sprayed and the chicken house had to be cleaned and sprayed.



The Herrick/Palmer Ranch, c. 1940. The Little Laramie River is in the foreground. Author's collection.

wait for me. If I was not ready to defend myself, he'd scratch my legs even through my jeans. I complained to Grandma, but she said he was a "good rooster," adding some explanation about eggs and hens, which I understood not at all. If I remembered, I would carry a broom, board or shovel and flatten him if I could reach him, but he became wary when I carried such weapons and waited until I was not armed. He even attacked Dad a time or two. If Dad's boot connected, the rooster would fly squawking through the air amid a shower of feathers and land with a bounce, but that didn't discourage him much either.

I was particularly vulnerable when I helped carry milk from the barn, which was one of my chores. I was only big enough to carry the buckets half-full, but that rooster seemed to know that I had both hands full with buckets and would ambush me. I finally learned to use the buckets as a shield and that silly thing would hit those buckets so hard he would dent them, knock himself flat and slop milk all over me.

It was a happy day for me when Grandma finally decided he was no longer a necessary part of her flock. He met his fate in the cooking pot. Tough as he was, I have never enjoyed a meal more. His spurs were given to me as a "trophy." Gramp, who was forever designing things, carved a cow head out of a thick board, attached some leather ears to the top and drilled holes for eyes, nostrils and to insert the spurs as horns. The "sculpture" immortalized my battle with this feathered terror. It still sits among my "artifacts."

There were two ranks of chickens in Grandma's flock—the plump, busy laying hens and their consorts, and the fryers who were predestined for the skillet. We needed the eggs, so hens who tried to "set" were discouraged by being thrown off the nest when eggs were gathered. This required either considerable skill or heavy gloves. Some of the hens objected to this infringement of their rights and their peck could be painful. I let Mom or Grandma handle this chore when possible. I also had the assignment of spotting a would-be mother and following her to a hidden nest and return there for the eggs each day.

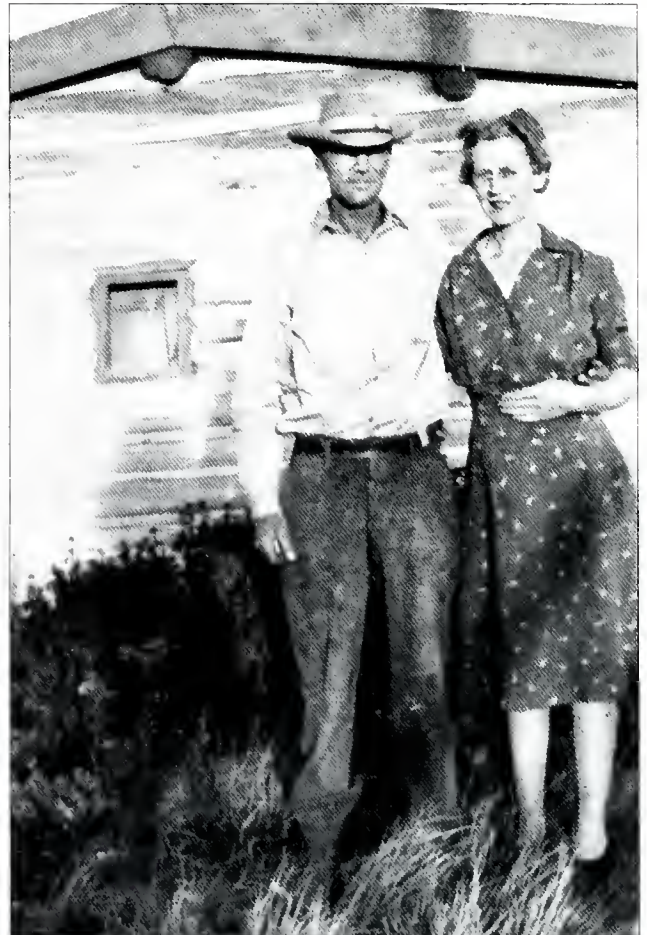
Occasionally a hen would be so stubbornly intent on motherhood, that Grandma would give up and let her raise a brood, even adding to her collection of eggs to make the best out of the situation. Or another hen would escape notice and surprise us with a set of fuzzy youngsters and then I could understand why Grandma and Mom liked their chickens. It was satisfying to watch the hen busily clucking and scratching and pecking at

various tidbits surrounded by the little balls of fluff trying to imitate her. It was also comical to see the hen try to gather the babies under her wings and watch an occasional head pop out between her feathers, or one independent chick perch on top the mother hen. And nothing is funnier than watching a tiny would-be rooster stand on tip toes straining to crow and instead, emitting a strangled squawk.

The few chicks produced by these miscreant hens were not enough to supply our table, so the process of raising the fryers actually began with the arrival of a big flat of baby chicks from the hatchery. It was a sure sign of spring when the post office and feed stores resounded with the discordant chorus of frightened chirps, cheeps and quacks of assorted miniature poultry.

If these boxes, which are unmistakable with the large holes punched in the sides, arrived during a cold spell, special care had to be taken to get them home without getting chilled. These little critters were simply looking for a chance to die—another strange chicken characteristic.

"Home" for these chicks for a few weeks was in back of the coal stove in the kitchen, a spot which they some-



Bill and Rena Lawrence. Author's collection.

times had to share with a newborn calf or other barnyard babies. During a bad spring storm the kitchen often resembled a nursery with various and sundry little ones bleating, mooing and peeping while we tried to keep up with their appetites with bottles and feeders.

Of course, I could not resist cuddling these soft little balls of fuzz. In fact, I did not even mind cleaning their box as this entailed gently gathering them up by the handfuls and transferring them to another, temporary, box while we laid down fresh newspaper, and clean and fill the water bottles and feeders. Our water devices were Mason jars screwed into special flat pans that had holes supposedly big enough to allow the babies to drink but small enough to keep them from falling in, getting wet or drowning. These also helped keep the water from becoming contaminated because the little critters are not careful about their bathroom habits. The chick feed was put in small shallow pans that had to be changed and filled frequently as they would tip them over or fill them with droppings.

Baby chicks are not compassionate. If they're not closely watched, they will peck some unfortunate member of the community to death or all gather in one corner and smother the bottom ones.

The chicks were kept behind the stove as long as it was cold and until they were big enough to hop or use their tiny developing wings to get out of the box. That entailed a special kind of patrol to round them up and put them back in the box to avoid stepping on them or cleaning up their little "deposits." Sometimes Grandma had to find a bigger, higher box to keep them corralled until they were transferred to the chicken house in a special pen. Since we had no incubator, if a cold snap hit, a lantern (later a light bulb) was hung near the pen to keep them warm—not a practice that a fire warden would approve, but it worked.

The process of raising these chicks ended when they were ready for the table, and that involved another unpleasant task. I shall never cease to be amazed at the memory of my gentle grandmother snaring a few fryers by their legs with a long wire hook, laying them efficiently on a chopping block, casually chopping off their heads with a hatchet and turning them loose to run crazily about to promote draining blood from the carcass. "Silly as a chicken with its head cut off" is not a phrase based on imagination. But the worst part was yet to come as the chickens were dunked in a bucket of boiling water to make the feathers come off easier and the birds could be plucked. It was a stench I'll never forget. But the prospect of that wonderful fried chicken made it all worth while.



"Grandma and Grandpa" Palmer. Note eggs in the lard bucket. Author's collection.

Baby chicks are cute and cuddly—and not too smart—but the ultimate in "dumb" were the turkey chicks that grandma raised occasionally. A friend or neighbor would give her a "setting" of eggs, three at the most, which she would put under a hen (chicken), and hope to get them big enough for holiday dinners.

Most chicks, like Henny Penny, had sense enough to run for cover if it rained or hailed—but not turkeys. They'd stand out in the rain, heads up with mouths open and drown if you let them—and they died of cold if they got wet. Their surrogate mother would sometimes try to cover them in the yard, if a rivulet didn't wash all of them down a hill—so when it rained someone had to go out to be sure they got under cover. They got special food, too. Grandma chopped up hard-boiled eggs, very fine, for their tender little gullets. I can picture her sitting in the sunlight by the kitchen window, patiently chopping eggs into tiny bits, using a butcher knife and an old tin pie plate. If Gramp came in the house about that time, he would mutter and grumble about the damage she was doing to the edge of a perfectly good knife. Grandma just serenely ignored him.

But it was the surrogate mother hen who really had the problems. She had a hard time keeping all three eggs safe and warm beneath her, just sort of perched on top. And, since Grandma tried to pick a really conscientious mother, the poor chicken was continuously frustrated and worried as she tried to teach her odd step-children a few chicken survival skills. She'd fuss and cluck and scratch trying to teach them how to find food and stay close to her. They usually paid no attention. She also faced a real dilemma trying to shelter the chicks as they grew bigger. There would be heads, legs or tails sticking out as she tried to balance herself on top of chicks at least half her size. But, however dumb they were, those turkeys sure tasted good at Thanksgiving.

Winter presented special problems with our chickens. When snow was deep, they could not go outside. The chicken house got pretty "gamey" and there was little room to feed them. When we moved to the other ranch, there was a half-empty storage shed nearby, so Dad would shovel a path to this other building. It was quite a sight to see Mom leading the chickens through the snowdrift to their feeding grounds. Both Mother and Grandma also prepared a bran mash concoction, to which water, sour milk, and kitchen scraps were added. In winter this was warmed up in a hope to keep the chickens happy and laying.

However, no amount of care could keep them producing eggs year around. When there were extra eggs, Grandma would "put them down" in "water glass" (sol. silicate of soda), which, when mixed with water, created a half hard substance which kept air away from the eggs. This was mixed in a large crock in the basement and the eggs carefully laid in it. These eggs were used only for baking, not for eating—and those crocks are now a part of my "treasures."

The worst chore of the whole chicken-raising procedure was "cleaning the chicken house" which had to be done a couple of times a year, usually in the spring and fall. The manure had to be shoveled out, the perches scraped off and the nest boxes cleaned. It was a messy, odorous job that Dad had to be reminded of several times before he "got around to it." One such cleaning ended in a temporary rift in our family... it happened this way.

Each time, after the nest boxes were cleaned, Mom would go down to the corrals with a bushel basket to get fresh hay to re-line the nests. On one side of the big center corral was a long log feed rack which was filled with hay in the fall. But on this late spring day it was nearly empty. Mom had to go to the loft of the nearby

big barn for fresh hay, and was, as usual, wearing a dress with a just-below-the-knee length skirt. (Women on those days rarely wore slacks or overalls except when actually working in the field). But as Mom came out of the barn and headed for the gate, she spotted a cow making a bee-line for her. That particular cow meant business. Most cows are pretty placid unless you actually mess with their calves, but this critter was born mad, and she hated the whole human race—and there is nothing any madder than a mad cow. She was a pretty roan cow with a very feminine head and a set of nasty little horns. When she had a calf she would charge even a horse and even a good cow horse was leery of those horns. If she calved out in the field, we simply let her be wherever she chose to be. I don't think we ever got her broken to milk even if she was supposed to be a good Shorthorn milk cow.

I'm not sure why she was in the corral on that particular day, but there she was. When Mom saw her, she let out a scream for "Billy" and headed for the empty hay rack at a high lope still hollering for "Billy" and carrying that basket full of hay. Since she had a good head start, she easily outran old "Roanie," and climbed into the rack, skirt and all, snagging her hose in the process. That might have ended the matter satisfactorily, but when she looked up, Dad was standing in the shed door, unable to conceal his huge grin. He had been too far away to head off the cow, and he had seen that Mom had a safe lead. He had, cowboy-like, simply relaxed and enjoyed the spectacle of his very modest and usually reserved spouse hot-footing it and climbing into that feed rack, leaving her dignity in her wake. Later he admitted that he was also amazed by the fact that she never let go of that basket. But Mother simply did not agree with his cowboy logic and it was considerable time before she even acknowledged his presence in the house.

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The Parvy of a Page:

Olaus Murie and the Historic Range of Wapiti in the West

By Ken Zentek

Olaus Murie, the field biologist and award-winning author, wrote in his 1951 book, *The Elk of North America*: "It may be safely concluded that the elk have always been at home in the mountains as well as on the plains."¹ Yet, after nearly fifty years, the myth that Euramericans drove elk off the plains endures. A recent letter to the editor of Idaho's *Lewiston Morning Tribune* illustrates this point. The correspon-

dent addressed the possible reintroduction of the grizzly bear into the Bitterroot Mountains of northern Idaho and western Montana. The author argued that elk provided food for grizzly bears and wolves and that since

** The author acknowledges the support of the John Calhoun Smith grant. He dedicates this article to Mrs. Margaret Murie.*



Olaus Murie

Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum

elk historically did not live in the mountains, then grizzlies did not exist there either. The letter stated:

According to some people who study this kind of thing, elk were originally a plains animal. They took refuge in the mountains like the deer only after the great onslaught of white settlers. If there was any deer or elk for the hunters of the Lewis and Clark expedition to bring in, they would not have had to eat their horses.²

Regarding the Lewis and Clark comment, the writer referred to often-cited portions of the "Corps of Discovery" journals which depict a lack of successful hunting in the Bitterroot Mountains during the expedition's crossings in 1805 and 1806.³ Unable to acquire game, the men resorted to horseflesh. Colt Killed Creek in the Clearwater National Forest lingers as testimony to this event.

Nonetheless, the assessment stems from misinterpretation of the Lewis and Clark journals. The expedition followed lofty ridge lines for easier passage. Game proved scarce in this high country during those seasons in which they traveled through the area, but their Native American guide told them that plenty of elk roamed the lower slopes by the Clearwater River.⁴ Elk range did extend into the mountains, just not in the precise location of Lewis and Clark during their sojourn.

The controversy regarding elk range solicited by the letter to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* extends far beyond scrutiny and interpretation of the journals of Lewis and Clark. The correspondence reinforces the myth by attributing it to scientists and implying its historical precedence. Journals of explorers, fur trappers and traders, hunters, and scientists, combined with later assessments by outdoor writers and researchers, reveals that elk lived both on the plains and in the mountains prior to the extension of the settlement frontier into the vast western United States.

Olaus Murie and his family lived in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for thirty-six years where he studied elk. Their domicile began in 1927 when President Calvin Coolidge reacted to the Jackson Hole ungulate winterkill problem by establishing the National Elk Commission. The commission appointed Murie to be the chief field biologist. He conducted a thorough study of the life history of elk and every factor affecting their collective welfare.⁵ He solved the problem of winterkill by discovering that overcrowding on the winter range caused the elk to browse farther along branches

than normal. The bigger, rougher browse and human-supplied foxtail hay caused mouth lesions. These lesions became infected and the resulting *Necrotic stomatitis* killed many animals.⁶ Murie's work led him to study the historic record concerning elk and prompted him to make the assessment that these animals historically resided in the mountains as well as on the plains.

The field biologist discussed the myth of historic elk range. His assertion responded to and anticipated the beliefs of many individuals such as the author of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* letter. Murie wrote:

Today elk are primarily mountain dwellers. Practically nowhere do they occur on the plains. Yet records of the early days state that at times elk were noted on the plains in great numbers. The thought has developed that the elk is primarily a plains animal which in early times did not inhabit the mountains but has been driven there to an unnatural home, in comparatively recent years by advancing civilization. To support this contention is the undisputed fact that formerly hordes of elk lived on the plains. Moreover, many early travelers failed to find elk, or at any rate failed to mention them, in certain mountain areas; and some even positively stated that game was scarce.⁷

Murie insisted that the myth existed because "the fact of migration was overlooked." People failed to consider local migration habits critical to wapiti seasonal nourishment. Murie suggested that observers confused

¹ Olaus J. Murie, *The Elk of North America* (Jackson: Teton Bookshop, 1979; reprint, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books/Wildlife Management Institute, 1951), 53. Another book which contains a chapter on the history of the elk including historic range is: Jack W. Thomas and Dale E. Toweill, eds., *Elk of North America: Ecology and Management* (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1982). Two good but dated bibliographies exist for elk: Paul Dalke, *Bibliography of Elk in North America* (Moscow: Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, 1968) and John B. Kirsch and Kenneth R. Greer, *Bibliography...Wapiti-American Elk and European Red Deer* (Helena: Montana Fish and Game Department, 1968).

² Letter to the editor, *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (Idaho) 28 January 1996, 3.

³ Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 8 vols., ed. Gary Moulton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), vols. 5-7, passim.

⁴ Paul Dalke, Levi Mohler, and Wesley Shaw, "Elk and Elk Hunting in Idaho," *Idaho Wildlife Review* 11 (March-April 1959): 4.

⁵ Margaret and Olaus Murie, *Wapiti Wilderness* (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), 8.

⁶ Robert B. Betts, *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole*, Wyoming (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1978), 190.

⁷ Murie, *Elk of North America*, 47-48.

elk winter range in the lowlands with permanent residency and they did not observe summer range high in adjacent mountains.⁸

Moving east to west, Euramerican pioneers initially encountered and harvested wapiti on the plains. Some of the more intrepid adventurers discovered elk in the mountains. They probably saw far fewer elk in the highland areas than on the plains. Murie offered an explanation: "The plains elk, both those that spent the whole year in the open country and those that only wintered there, naturally would be destroyed first, as they were so accessible."⁹ Thus, the travelers saw numerous elk in lowland areas because both more pioneers passed through the area and more elk could be seen in such areas. Murie explained the comparatively lower numbers of wapiti recorded in the mountains. He stated that "the destruction of mountain elk while on the winter range on the plains could very well account for the relative scarcity of these animals even in the high mountains in the few years immediately after the so-called great slaughter."¹⁰

Murie was familiar with historic records. *The Elk of North America* shows that he cited several explorer journals in formulating his opinion about elk in the mountains. He used Osborne Russell's invaluable journal from the 1830s in documenting significant numbers of elk in the Uintah, Green and Teton mountains along with headwaters of the Yellowstone River. Washington Irving's rendition of Captain Benjamin Bonneville's narrative from the early 1830s verified elk in Idaho's Salmon Mountains and Oregon's Blue Mountains. The 1871 Doane expedition into Yellowstone headwaters echoed Russell's finding of elk in the area. The 1872 Hayden survey expedition recorded abundant quantities of elk in the Elk, Sheephead, and Medicine Bow ranges of the Rocky Mountains. Geologist Frank Bradley reported similar abundance along the headwaters of the Snake River the following year. Emil Wolfe saw numerous elk in Jackson Hole throughout the 1870s. In Idaho, Clinton Merriam found wapiti common in the Sawtooth, Pahsimeroi, Salmon, and Bruneau ranges.¹¹ Murie documented these sources to validate his theory that elk lived in the mountains as well as the plains.

Murie commented on the historic elk ranges within Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and the Yellowstone National Park area. He insisted that in Idaho people seldom found elk in the arid plains. Most of the state's wapiti stayed in or near the numerous mountain ranges, especially in the Henry's Lake area of the southeast portion of the state.¹²

Concerning Montana, Murie believed that elk mainly survived along the wooded bottom lands, ravines, and river breaks. He thought that the state historically possessed mountain herds, but the numbers of animals remained fewer than in the lowlands until state fish and game department personnel later restocked the highlands. In particular, Murie thought mountainous, wooded northwest Montana probably contained a very limited quantity of wapiti.¹³

The field biologist considered Wyoming to be the historically most populated with elk of the three northern Rockies states. He contended that comparatively large numbers of wapiti seasonally wandered between the ranges and river basins. He juxtaposed these local migrations to those of Montana's elk population which tended to either live on the plains or in the mountains and not on the plains and in the mountains.¹⁴ Where Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming converge into the greater Yellowstone ecosystem in general, and Yellowstone National Park in particular, Murie acknowledged that wapiti remained scarce in the Park area until after park officials enforced protection. At that point, thousands of the locally migrating elk stayed close to or within park boundaries on a more permanent basis. Murie based this assumption on his review of Yellowstone National Park superintendent records.¹⁵

He formulated his opinion on elk range by combining the historic records with his scientific observations. He acknowledged that hunting, habitat restriction caused by human settlement, stocking with available elk, and protection influenced the range selection by elk. However, he ultimately concluded that "whatever the sequence of events was, the herds now living in the mountains are undoubtedly the descendants of elk that were originally mountain dwellers [unless artificial restocking occurred]."¹⁶

Proving Murie's conclusion requires consideration of historic and contemporary documents. Did elk, or wapiti, inhabit the mountains prior to white hunting and settlement pressure? The journals of fur trappers and traders provide the greatest service due to the passage of these hardy entrepreneurs across the territory.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49-53. Interested readers can consult Murie's bibliography to examine his sources.

¹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

With respect to the intermountain region of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, any analysis of the historic records commences with the journals of Lewis and Clark. Incidentally, the term "wapiti" first appeared scientifically about the time Lewis and Clark returned from their epic journey. In 1806, scientist B. S. Barton insisted that since the elk remained yet to receive systematic analysis, that he could assume "the liberty of giving it a specific name." Barton stated, "I called it *Wapiti* which is the name by which it is known among the Shawnee or Shawnees Indians."¹⁷

Regardless of Barton's terminology, Lewis and Clark referred to wapiti as elk. Their route did not take them into Wyoming, but they did cross the length of Montana and the width of northern Idaho. The journals reveal that the "Corps of Discovery" found elk across Montana from the plains of the eastern part of the state to the mountains of the western part.¹⁸ The chroniclers mentioned the presence of elk on numerous occasions. For example, they found wapiti in the Beaverhead River drainage of mountainous southwest Montana and found them in the ranges and basins to the west as well.¹⁹

However, many individuals, such as the letter writer to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, use the journals to prove that elk did not inhabit the mountains. They note that the explorers reported large herds of the ungulates on the plains, but did not make such reports in the mountains. This remains true, but more careful reading of the journal shows that the expedition did find elk sign in the mountains. The entry of William Clark written on September 13, 1805, near Lolo Hot Springs in the Bitterroot Mountains close to the present day Montana-Idaho boundary illustrates this point. Clark explained that the men "passed Several Springs which I Observed the Deer, Elk & c. had made roads to."²⁰ The term "roads" implies an area of heavy animal use which suggests that many elk inhabited or at least traveled through the area. That the expedition failed to find elk in the vicinity at that exact time supports Murie's theory of local migrations.

Sustained historic contact with the intermountain region of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming did not occur for nearly two decades in the wake of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Fur trappers and traders followed in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark and traveled into new intermountain areas. Their records further verify the presence of wapiti in the mountains. Traveling in western Montana in the early 1820s, Alexander Ross and his company of trappers found that "elk became abundant" in the Bitterroot Valley. He described them as "numerous."²¹ Ross also found what he characterized

as a "superabundance" of game on the headwaters of the Missouri River in southwestern Montana. He wrote, "We were at the same time surrounded on all sides by large herds of buffalo, deer, moose, and elk."²² Ross' records illustrate the range of wapiti in the mountain valleys of western Montana well in advance of white settlement pressure which remained decades away in the future from the 1820s.

The Hudson's Bay Company's Peter Skene Ogden and his Snake River Brigade journals further illuminated the range of wapiti in the 1820s. The Snake River Brigade's trappers worked in south central Idaho in 1826. They found elk both in the mountains and down on the Snake River plain. The brigade relied on elk venison to sustain them while they trapped in the area.²³ During the winter of 1827-1828, Ogden and his brigade wintered near the confluence of the Snake and Portneuf rivers by present day Pocatello, Idaho. Ogden sent out numerous hunting forays to acquire meat. Hunters harvested elk on many occasions throughout the area.²⁴ Ogden's journals display the presence of elk in the Idaho mountains and reflect the findings of his colleague Alexander Ross in Montana.

Another source of information regarding elk in the mountains during the 1820s emerges from more obscure origins than the journals of Ross and Ogden. In 1826, fur entrepreneur William Kittson plied his trade from the environs of Kootenai House at the mouth of the Fisher River on the Kootenai River in rugged northwest Montana. Kittson reported his fur harvest for the year. From the "Kutenai" Indians, he acquired 1,024 beaver, 473 deer, and 274 elk skins.²⁵ Thus, by the 1820s, chroniclers documented significant populations of mountain wapiti across western Montana and down

¹⁷ B. S. Barton, "An Account of the Cervus Wapiti or Southern Elk of North America," *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal* 7 (March); 36.

¹⁸ Lewis and Clark, *Journals*, vols. 4 and 5, passim.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 133-134.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

²¹ Alexander Ross, *Fur Hunters of the Far West*, ed. Kenneth A. Spaulding (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956; reprint), 215-216.

²² *Ibid.*, 291.

²³ Peter Skene Ogden, *SNAKE COUNTRY JOURNALS 1824-25 AND 1825-26*, ed. E.E. Rich (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1950), 139-141.

²⁴ Peter Skene Ogden, *SNAKE COUNTRY JOURNALS 1827-28 AND 1828-29*, ed. Glyndwr Williams (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1971), 49-70.

²⁵ Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, *Flathead and Kootenay: The Rivers, the Tribes and the Region's Traders* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1969), 229.

into south central Idaho. In the 1830s there were further encounters as explorers gained information about elk range in Wyoming and along the headwaters of the Yellowstone and Snake Rivers in what today is known as the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks.

In 1831, fur trapper John Work recorded that he and his accomplices hunted and killed elk in the mountainous areas of western Montana.²⁶ By December 14, 1832, Work and his fellow trappers approached Lemhi Pass near the present boundary of Idaho and Montana. Work recorded, "A herd of some hundreds of elk were feeding a little to the one side of our camp; some of the people went in pursuit and killed three of them, they are very lean."²⁷ Three days later, the trappers discovered another large herd in the mountains along the headwaters of the Salmon River.²⁸ After spending the winter in the area, Work again found a large herd of wapiti at Lemhi Pass on March 20, 1832.²⁹ Apparently, Work kept running across herds making their local migrations as later explained by Olaus Murie. The expedition moved west. On May 17, they harvested "some elk" near Trail Creek in south central Idaho.³⁰ Less than a month later, one expedition member named Kanota killed an elk near the middle fork of the Payette River. Work explained that "animals are very scarce here at present probably owing to the snow having so lately gone off the ground." His next lines indicate that he understood the local migrations of the area's ungulates.

Work wrote, "From the appearance of the old tracks, elk and deer were very numerous here in the fall."³¹ Obviously, Work believed elk inhabited the mountains.

Later in the 1830s, American businessman and hopeful fur trader/fish merchant Nathaniel Wyeth recorded many elk in the mountain valleys of southwestern Montana in those areas previously visited by Lewis and Clark and Alexander Ross.³² Mountain man Robert Newell provided some of the earliest information about wapiti in the mountain ranges of eastern Wyoming. In March, 1838, Newell wrote that near the Powder River "Elk Deer Sheep and other game inhabit the mountains."³³

²⁶ John Work. *The Journal of John Work: A Chief Trader of the Hudson's Bay Company During His Expedition from Vancouver to the Flatheads and Blackfeet of the Pacific Northwest*, eds. William S. Lewis and Paul C. Phillips (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1923), 89, 94.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 154.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

³² Nathaniel J. Wyeth, *Correspondence and Journals 1831-1836*, ed. F.G. Young, a reprint of *Sources of the History of Oregon*, vols. 3-6 (Eugene: University Press, 1899), 197.

³³ Robert Newell, *Memoranda: Travels in the Territory of Missouri: Travle to the Kayuse War: Together with a Report on the Indians South of the Columbia River*, ed. Dorothy O. Johansen (Portland: Champoeg Press, 1959), 36.



Feeding elk at the National Elk Refuge near Jackson. Olaus Murie was appointed field biologist at Jackson in 1927. The woman in the photograph is not identified. S. N. Leek collection, American Heritage Center

However, Newell did not offer the first account of wapiti in present day Wyoming. Osborne Russell documented many encounters with elk in the western part of the state. His journal supersedes that of Newell and survives as a record of historic elk range and numbers in the Grand Teton and Yellowstone areas. Owing to the importance attached to elk in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem to include Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and Jackson Hole, Russell's journal receives much academic scrutiny. For example, Murie relied on it to draw his conclusions about historic elk range.

During his trapping days, Russell worked throughout the intermountain region. He chronicled the mountain range of wapiti. In 1834, he described the area around Ham's Fork of the Green River. The trapper wrote that the "country is very mountainous and broken except in the small alluvial bottoms along the streams, it abounds with Buffalo, Antelope, Elk and Bear and some few Deer along the Rivers [sic]."³⁴ His journal provided more than just outright statements about the range of wapiti. For example, he noted that a village of Bannock Indians offered a large supply of elk skins for trade at Fort Hall in southeastern Idaho.³⁵ Logic dictates that the Bannocks acquired these skins in the mountains and adjoining basins of their homeland. Another allusion to Native American possession of elk skins likely acquired in the mountains emerges in Russell's documentation of trade in July, 1835, with Sheepeater Indians of Shoshone stock in the Lamar Valley of present day Yellowstone National Park. Russell stated, "We obtained a large number of Elk Deer and Sheep skins from them of the finest quality."³⁶ The Russell journal necessitates scrutiny of such trade passages to more fully establish the historic range of elk in the mountains.

After trading with the Sheepeaters in the Lamar Valley, Russell and the other mountain men moved on to the Gallatin River of Montana. At this mountain waterway, Russell made the observation: "[I] killed the fattest Elk I ever saw. It was a large Buck the fat on his rump measured seven inches thick he had 14 spikes or branches on the left horn and 12 on the right."³⁷ Following this kill in 1835, Russell and his companions continued to hunt and trap in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

In August, 1836, Russell worked with the famous mountain man Jim Bridger and other trappers within the present boundaries of Yellowstone National Park. Russell remarked about the wildlife near present day Fishing Bridge. He wrote, "This valley is interspersed

with scattering groves of tall pines forming shady retreats for the numerous Elk and Deer during the heat of the Day." The company of trappers followed elk trails through adjacent hot springs areas and supped on elk venison.³⁸ They followed the course of the Yellowstone River and in September of 1836 moved to the mouth of Rosebud Creek on the Yellowstone River. Russell declared that "Deer Elk and Grizzly bear are abundant."³⁹ At Pryor's Fork, Russell similarly witnessed that the area "abounds with Buffalo Elk Deer and Bear."⁴⁰ In the span of just two months, Osborne Russell revealed that wapiti occupied both the high and low country of the Yellowstone ecosystem from the mountainous headwaters to the river breaks out on the plains.

Russell and his companions spent much of 1837 through 1839 in Wyoming. In 1837, he found elk to be "abundant" in the Wind River country.⁴¹ To the north, within the confines of what later became Yellowstone National Park, Russell's experience with wapiti continued. On several occasions, the trappers found, harvested, and ate elk.⁴² Near Yellowstone Lake, Russell "found the whole country swarming with Elk we killed a fat Buck for supper."⁴³ The mountain man company traveled to the region of present Grand Teton National Park and the National Elk Refuge of Jackson Hole. Along Lewis' Fork of the Snake River in January, 1839, they discovered "plenty of Sheep Elk and some few Bulls among the rocks and low spurs." The mountain men trudged through two feet of snow to hunt these elk and maintain the winter meat supply.⁴⁴ The trappers remained in the area through the summer and spent a considerable amount of time hunting elk. At one point, Russell claimed that they encountered a "large band of elk."⁴⁵

Osborne Russell's *The Journal of a Trapper* persists as a "factual, unembellished narrative" that sheds extraordinary light on the range of significant numbers of elk in the mountains of the Yellowstone ecosystem

³⁴ Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, ed., by Aubrey L. Haines (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965; reprint from the original manuscript in the William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana in the Yale University Library), 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 63-65.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 102-110.

and other highland areas well in advance of white settlement.⁴⁶ Sources of information for the 1840s pale in comparison, but do exist. On July 25, 1845, overland traveler Joel Palmer found Fort Bridger on the Oregon Trail in southwestern Wyoming stocked with a "good supply" of elk skins.⁴⁷

The Native American and Euramerican hunters of the basins and ranges of western Wyoming evidently found numerous wapiti. Far to the northwest in forested, mountainous northern Idaho, the Jesuit priest Father Nicolas Point found elk common in the land of the Couer d'Alene Indians.⁴⁸ These two allusions to wapiti in the 1840s fail to provide conclusive evidence of elk range in the mountains. Only when considered in light of other information from previous and following decades do the journals of Palmer and Point offer solid testimony.

The records of another trading post, Fort Owen, located in Montana's Bitterroot Valley, offer further evidence of wapiti in the mountains prior to heavy pressure from white settlement. A review of Fort Owen's ledgers for 1851 and 1852 shows that an average of every third fur trading customer exchanged an elk skin with the post.⁴⁹ Again, this type of testimony must be considered with the rest of the body of evidence. Lewis and Clark found sign of elk in the mountains of western Montana nearly five decades before the years examined in the Fort Owen ledger. The ledgers confirm the continued presence of wapiti in the region.

Further scant evidence of elk range in the mountains of the states under consideration in this manuscript comes from the recollections of "Uncle Nick" Wilson.⁵⁰ Uncle Nick left his white family in his youth to live with the Shoshone Indians. He made the seasonal rounds throughout Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana with his adopted people. Uncle Nick described the importance of the elk to the Shoshones when he recounted an expedition in the early 1860s to the "elk country" of southwest Montana. He recalled the killing of approximately one hundred elk during the fall along the Jefferson River which forms one of the three forks of the headwaters of the Missouri River in mountainous southwestern Montana.⁵¹

The three decades from 1840 through 1870 offer meager information about the range of elk in the mountains of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Chroniclers rectified this lack of attention to wapiti populations in the 1870s. People sensed the so-called "passing of the Great West."⁵² Therefore, travelers to the area took care to record their observations. Two of

these, the Earl of Dunraven and George Bird Grinnell, documented their findings. Additionally, the federal government established Yellowstone National Park in 1872. Explorers of the new park and administrators furnished reports concerning the numbers of wildlife.

The British Earl of Dunraven hunted the intermountain region in 1874. He directly commented on the ranges of elk in his book titled *The Great Divide*. Dunraven hunted the headwaters of the Green River in western Wyoming in the autumn 1874. He sought wapiti and deer and knew that they passed through the country in great numbers. Dunraven lamented that he arrived in the area "too early" and experienced "scarcely any success." He explained the cause of his lack of success by noting that wapiti

movements being regulated by the seasons, [make] it impossible to predict the arrival of the herds... They do not remain long; the bands quickly pass through and are gone. The same state of things exists in the Upper Yellowstone country, and indeed in nearly every district with which I am personally acquainted. A locality where game remains all the year round is hard to find.⁵³

Dunraven added, "I expect I should starve to-day in a place where four years ago I saw, I am sure, more than a thousand wapiti in one week."⁵⁴

Dunraven specifically addressed plains versus mountains as habitat for wapiti. He stated that "you may

⁴⁶ Haines, in Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, i.

⁴⁷ Joel Palmer, *Journal of Travels Over the Rocky Mountains*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, in *Early Western Travels, 1784-1846*, 39 vols. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1905), 30: 80.

⁴⁸ Nicholas Point, S.J., *Wilderness Kingdom: Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains, 1840-1847*, trans. Joseph Donnelly, S.J. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), 180.

⁴⁹ George F. Weisel, ed., *Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger* (Missoula: Montana State University Press, 1955), 7-58.

⁵⁰ Wilson, for whom the town in Teton County is named, came to Jackson Hole in 1889. Phil Roberts, et al, *Wyoming Almanac* (Laramie: Skyline West, 1997), 84.

⁵¹ Elijah Nicholas and Charles A. Wilson, *The White Indian Boy and Its Sequel the Return of the White Indian* (Rapid City: Fenske Printing Inc., 1985; reprint of *The White Indian Boy and Uncle Nick Among the Shoshones*, Salt Lake City: Skelton Book Company, 1910), 19.

⁵² George Bird Grinnell, *The Passing of the Great West: Selected Papers of George Bird Grinnell*, ed., John Reiger (New York: Winchester Press, 1972). Reiger used the term "passing of the Great West" in the title for his edition of Grinnell's papers.

⁵³ Earl of Dunraven, *The Great Divide: Travels in the Upper Yellowstone in the Summer of 1874* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967; reprint, London: Chatto & Windus, 1876), 9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

find herds feeding right down upon the plain among the cattle: and in a fortnight there will not be one left." The British earl posed the query, "Where do they go?" His answer reflected the mountainous range of the elk. Dunraven claimed the large ungulates went "up to the bare fells ... to the deep, black recesses of primeval forest; to valleys, basins, little parks and plains hidden among the folds of the mountains."⁵⁵ Dunraven made it clear that in the 1870s wapiti remained a plains and mountain animal as the frontier closed with the establishment of ranches and farms.

Grinnell, the famed conservationist and sportsman, explored Montana and Wyoming in 1875. He successfully hunted wapiti near present Livingston, Montana, on his way to Yellowstone National Park.⁵⁶ Following his examination of Yellowstone which served as part of a larger mission to survey the intermountain region, Grinnell furnished a report to Colonel William Ludlow. Ludlow included the letter in his 1875 analysis titled *A Reconnaissance from Carroll, Montana to the Yellowstone National Park and Return*. Grinnell mentioned a "terrible destruction of large game, for the hides alone, which is currently going on in those portions of Montana and Wyoming through which we passed." He claimed that hunters persisted in slaughtering elk "by thousands." More specifically, Grinnell stated, "It is estimated that during the winter of 1874-1875 not less than three thousand elk were killed in the valley of the Yellowstone between the mouth of Trail Creek and the Hot Springs."⁵⁷ Grinnell foresaw the extermination of area big game herds unless the animals received protection. He insisted that market hunters deserved culprit status for their role in the destruction.⁵⁸ Grinnell's report sheds light on the possible numbers of animals in the ranges of the Yellowstone ecosystem. His account differs from that of Osborne Russell in that Grinnell commented on his findings based upon observation and interviews while Russell simply listed his observations.

General W.E. Strong delivered more information about wapiti in 1875. The general wrote his account in *A Trip to the Yellowstone National Park in July, August, and September, 1875*. Strong echoed previous chroniclers' comments, such as those of the Earl of Dunraven, about the range and local seasonal migrations made by wapiti. General Strong hunted across Montana. Traveling on the Missouri River through the Missouri Breaks, he explained that the stretch of river extending 250 miles westward from Fort Peck marked an area of significant elk populations. "There is no part of Montana, excepting the Judith Basin, equal to this

section of the Missouri for bears, buffalo, elk, and deer," explained the military commander.⁵⁹ Thus, he reiterated that some wapiti remained on the plains while other elk inhabited the mountains. About the mountain-dwelling elk, Strong wrote, "When the snow falls and the fierce winter storms begin in November and December, the elk, deer, and sheep leave the summits of the snowy ranges and come in great bands to the foot-hills and valleys."⁶⁰ Strong noted that market hunters in Yellowstone National Park wreaked havoc on the elk populations in the lower reaches of their habitat during the winter months. The market hunters made numerous easy kills using snowshoes to close on weakened elk mired in snow. Strong documented that market hunters killed more than four thousand elk in the Mammoth Hot Springs Basin alone during the 1874-1875 winter. He added, "Their carcasses and branching antlers can be seen on every hillside and in every valley."⁶¹ In light of this slaughter, he concluded that there existed "considerable game still left on the west side of the Yellowstone, which, in the summer months, seeks the highest mountain summits to escape the flies and mosquitoes."⁶² Nonetheless, Strong believed that he witnessed a decreasing elk population within the confines of Yellowstone National Park, and like Grinnell, he maintained that only protection could save the park's ungulates from certain demise.⁶³

Strong did not directly observe the local migrations, winter slaughter, and declining population over time in the Yellowstone region that he discussed in his journal. He relied on two individuals for his information. First, mountain man Jack Baronette accompanied the expedition. Strong surely discussed the range of elk with this local expert, who the general praised as possessing extensive "knowledge of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Western Territories."⁶⁴ With respect to the winter harvest, Strong stated that "Jack Baronette can point out and name the men who glide

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁶ Grinnell, *Selected Papers*, 117.

⁵⁷ George Bird Grinnell, "American Game Protection," in George Bird Grinnell and Charles Sheldon, eds., *Hunting and Conservation: The Book of the Boone and Crockett Club* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 217.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁵⁹ General W.E. Strong, *A Trip to the Yellowstone National Park in July, August, and September, 1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 142.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 104-105.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

up to the bands of elk on snowshoes and shoot them down."⁶⁵

Lieutenant Gustavus C. Doane also went on the Strong expedition. Doane explored the park area five years earlier with the General Washburn survey.⁶⁶ The junior officer demonstrated his prowess as an outdoorsman guiding the Strong entourage along with Baronette. General Strong decided that Doane's earlier reports indicated more elk in the area and that the subsequent winter slaughters accounted for a diminishing population.⁶⁷

Yellowstone National Park administrator Major Philetus W. Norris also commented on the 1875 killing of wapiti during the winter. He claimed that two thousand of the more than four thousand elk destroyed in the Mammoth Hot Springs area perished at the hands of the Bottler brothers who resided in southwest Montana.⁶⁸ Norris furnished his annual report in 1877 which denoted an "abundance of elk" in the park numbering in the "thousands."⁶⁹

Norris' documentation combined with that of Dunraven, Grinnell, and Strong to yield a picture of wapiti range that chroniclers neglected during the three preceding decades. The observations of these four individuals depicted wapiti residing both in the mountains and on the river breaks of the plains. They quantified numbers of wapiti in the Yellowstone region that supported previous assertions such as those of Osborne Russell in the 1830s. Local migrations accounted for the clumping of elk herds in the winters which gave the appearance of massive big game populations that people may have misinterpreted later as animals driven off the plains into mountain refuges.

Grinnell and others continued to provide data on the range of elk during the 1880s and 1890s. Grinnell found "abundant" wapiti in mountainous northwest Montana on the lands later designated Glacier National Park.⁷⁰

Also in Montana, pioneer Granville Stuart observed that

in 1880, the country was practically uninhabited. .. there were deer, elk, wolves and coyotes on every hill and in every thicket. .. [while] in the fall of 1883, the antelope, elk, and deer were indeed scarce.⁷¹

His statement could be misinterpreted to mean that settlement drove animals off the newly people-inhabited plains; however, the statement probably reflects that settlers killed animals where they found them.

Although Grinnell's and Stuart's independent assessments of wapiti locations support the argument that settlement did not drive elk off the plains into new

mountain homes, Theodore Roosevelt's contentions constitute invaluable reinforcement. Roosevelt came west in the 1880s and established a ranch in western Dakota Territory along the Little Missouri River.

The young rancher, who later led the hunter-naturalist movement that enhanced game management and habitat preservation, spent much of his recreational time pursuing game. He found elk particularly alluring as made evident by his documentation of what he believed to be the slaying of the last wapiti near his ranch. Roosevelt bemoaned the "last of his race that will ever be found in our neighborhood."⁷² His comment reflects that the wapiti populations died in place and did not migrate long distances to new ranges. To pursue elk, the energetic outdoorsman "found it necessary to leave [his] ranch" for the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming where wapiti still roamed.⁷³ In 1891, he experienced a successful hunt farther west in Wyoming's Shoshone Mountains where he reported "elk all around."⁷⁴ He also found elk abundant in the Bitterroot Mountains.⁷⁵

Roosevelt's hunting narratives and observations indicate the presence of wapiti in the plains or river breaks and in the mountains, and that the local elk populations lived and died on their home ranges. Always one to make scientific analyses, Roosevelt specifically addressed the range of wapiti. His numerous remarks warrant presentation and scrutiny. For example, in his book, *The Deer Family*, published in 1924, Roosevelt explained that humans exterminated elk on the high plains except in rough country refuges such as the Black Hills, Nebraska's Sand Hills, and bad lands. He wrote, "The wapiti ceased to be a plains animal. .. the wapiti was thenceforth a beast of the Rocky Mountain region

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁶⁸ Aubrey L. Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, 2 vols. (Yellowstone National Park: Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, 1977), 1: 205.

⁶⁹ Don E. Redfearn, Russell L. Robbins, and Charles P. Stone, "Refuges and Elk Management," in Thomas and Toweill, 483, 486.

⁷⁰ Madison Grant, "The Beginnings of Glacier National Park," in Grinnell and Sheldon, *Hunting and Conservation*, 454.

⁷¹ Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier*, 2 vols., ed. Paul C. Phillips (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1925), 1:187-188.

⁷² Theodore Roosevelt, *Hunting Trips on the Prairie and in the Mountains* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), 193.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 162-163.

⁷⁴ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Wilderness Hunter: An Account of the Big Game of the United States and Its Chase with Horse, Hound and Rifle*, 2 vols. (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1907), 1: 209, 235.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 184.

proper." This quotation taken by itself without considering the previously given information about rough country refuges could be misinterpreted to mean that people drove elk off the plains into the Rocky Mountains.

Further reading of Roosevelt's text elucidates his intentions. He maintained that destruction of the species occurred in the mountains as well. Montana wapiti populations scattered across forested lands "protected by denser timber." Meanwhile, Roosevelt made the following assessment about Wyoming wapiti:

They have nearly vanished from the Big Horn Mountains . . . they are still plentiful in and around their great nursery and breeding ground, the Yellowstone National Park.⁷⁶

In another book, *Hunting Trips on the Prairie and in the Mountains*, originally copyrighted in 1885, the hunter-naturalist contended that elk remained plentiful on the plains just five years earlier. Roosevelt clarified the on-site destruction of wapiti herds. He explained, "After the buffalo the elk are the first animals to disappear from a country when it is settled." Roosevelt continued, "This arises from their size and consequent conspicuousness, and the eagerness with which they are followed by hunters."⁷⁷ Roosevelt also discussed local migrations so critical to Olaus Murie's theory on historic elk range. In another statement from which out-of-context quotes could lead a reader to believe that Roosevelt argued that settlement drove elk off the plains and into the mountains, Roosevelt elaborated on wapiti range. He stated:

Formerly the elk were plentiful all over the plains, coming down into them in great bands during the fall months and traversing their entire extent. But the incoming of hunters and cattlemen has driven them off the ground as completely as buffalo, unlike the latter, however, they are still very common in the dense woods that cover the Rocky Mountains and the other great mountain chains.⁷⁸

Careful scrutiny of this passage reveals that Roosevelt referred to those wapiti that seasonally migrated between mountains and adjacent plains. Following hunting and ranching pressure, the reduced numbers of these elk tended to remain in thicker cover. Roosevelt's experiences and observations punctuated a century of chronicles regarding wapiti habitat in the intermountain region of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming beginning with Lewis and Clark in 1805. Careful research

of these records divulge that wapiti did not leave their high plains homelands for the high country in the face of human settlement. They survived and perished *in situ*.

The twentieth century literature on historic wapiti range falls into two categories. First, old-timers reflected on elk. Second, biologists/outdoor writers, like Olaus Murie, focused on the past for guidance in modern elk management. A sampling of old-timer recollections from Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming typifies the reality and myth of historic elk range. Depression era outfitter Lafe Cox spoke about the mountainous terrain of central Idaho. He stated, "There wasn't any elk right in this part of the country. . . the elk was originally more of a desert or a flat animal, and the hunters and the people and everything started them back and they went back into the upper country."⁷⁹ Cox obviously witnessed the distribution of populations as determined by local migrations in Idaho. He did not consider that the desert or flat lands elk either seasonally migrated to the high country or existed simultaneously with elk in the high country. Moreover, years of elk reintroductions into the Idaho backcountry, but not into the inhabited areas, preceded the Depression.⁸⁰

In Montana, Kootenai Indian Peter Andrew remembered that his people regularly harvested elk for their meat and hides in northwest Montana. This mountain harvesting possessed historic antecedents and persisted through the settlement frontier into the twentieth century.⁸¹ Long-time Wyoming resident, J. R. Jones wrote in 1925 about the elk migrations of Wyoming. He maintained that Carbon, Albany, Natrona, and Converse counties possessed a "waterless plain" where thousands of wapiti spent the winters. In the spring, they went to the mountain meadows. About the waterless plain, Jones wrote, "The elk have disappeared from this region, the survivors having adjusted themselves to winter conditions in the high mountains."⁸² Jones' statement shows that hunters killed the majority of the elk

⁷⁶ Theodore Roosevelt and others, *The Deer Family* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1924), 133-134.

⁷⁷ Roosevelt, *Hunting Trips*, 155.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁷⁹ Lafe Cox, interview manuscript #0020. Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, 2 June 1973.

⁸⁰ Larry D. Bryant and Chris Maser, "Classification and Distribution," in Toweill and Thomas, 42.

⁸¹ Johnson, *Flathead and Kootenay*, 70-71.

⁸² Joseph R. Jones, *Preserving the Game: Gambling, Mining, Hunting, and Conservation in the Vanishing West* (Boise: Boise State University, 1989; reprints, *Outdoor America*, no dates given), 138.

in the lowlands and the survivors altered their migrations to avoid death. The old-timers remembered the elk, but modern management impacted their view. Game managers grew herds over the course of the twentieth century. Like the old-timers, the scientists' and nature authors' views merit consideration.

Idaho authors provide a glimpse of available literature about historic wapiti range. Zoologist William Davis in 1939 assessed that historically elk "occurred commonly on the plains and lower valleys in Idaho and the West in general, but 'civilization' has pushed them farther and farther into the mountainous areas where they are less disturbed."⁸³ Again, it remains apparent that Davis' knowledge of historically abundant elk on the plains and in the lower valleys combined with his awareness of significant elk populations in the forested mountains in 1939 to prompt his contribution to the myth of historic elk range. Reintroductions and game management in the mountains and adjoining wintering areas produced the appearance that "civilization" drove elk off the plains. Later Idaho authors gave a more accurate picture.

Idaho Wildlife Review writers and Idaho Fish and Game Department personnel Errol Nielson, Marshall Edson, and Brent Ritchie studied historic elk range. Nielson conducted his research in eastern Idaho and published some of his results in 1955. He found that "a big game herd is closely tied to its customary 'home grounds' particularly in winter."⁸⁴ This led him to assess that early eastern Idaho Euramerican settlers hunted resident elk or migratory elk that spent the winter away from Yellowstone National Park or Wyoming. Settlement eventually cut off the migratory elk from their winter grounds. Thus, the increase in animals that remained in the Yellowstone region gave the appearance that plains elk successfully sought refuge in the mountains. Nielson summarized his assertion: "Herds that remained on the plains disappeared but animals that took to the mountains survived and increased."⁸⁵ He did not believe that settlement drove elk off the plains and into the mountains, but only that local migration patterns altered in the face of human pressure.

Edson researched Idaho development and game management history to quantify the historic twentieth century plight of the state's wapiti. The long-time editor of the *Idaho Wildlife Review* determined that big game animals existed few and far between in Idaho at the dawn of the century. His teams of interviewers heard from old-timers that prior to protection of big game, backcountry Idahoans relentlessly pursued elk. Even the mountains remained largely barren of significant

populations owing to hunting by miners. These workers supplemented their diets with elk venison in the big boom areas of Pend d'Oreille, the Salmon country, the Clearwater country, and Thunder Mountain. Even as late as 1918, the United States Forest Service counted just 610 elk in Idaho. By 1924, management and reintroductions grew the herd to more than 5,000. In 1934, about 16,000 elk roamed the state. Three decades later, the population approached its peak at 60,000. Edson's numbers dispel the notion that elk from the plains sought refuge in the mountains. After all, no sanctuary existed in Idaho's mountains until modern game management took hold.

⁸³ William B. Davis, *The Recent Mammals of Idaho* (Caldwell: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1939), 367.

⁸⁴ Errol Nielson, "The Elk of Eastern Idaho," *Idaho Wildlife Review* 7 (September-October 1985), 10.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.



Margaret and Olaus Murie. Collection of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Ritchie, a senior research biologist, added another important element to debunking the myth. He put forward the concept of a lack of universal game abundance in the West. Ritchie surveyed the journals of trappers such as Osborne Russell. The biologist deduced that "game abundance was not universal. . . where game was plentiful it was very abundant, but in other areas there was little or none."⁸⁷ Adding this notion of no universal game abundance to local migration characteristics produces a situation that would confuse any chronicler or researcher of wapiti populations. Early settlers saw great numbers of elk on the plains while later settlers saw many elk in the mountains. People incorrectly concluded that Euramerican settlement drove elk off the plains.

Literature about elk continued to increase over the course of the twentieth century. Olaus Murie's *Elk of North America* was and still is the most definitive book on the subject by a single author. Nonetheless, in 1982, the Wildlife Management Institute published *Elk of North America: Ecology and Management*. Numerous experts contributed to this comprehensive work. The bibliography reflects reliance on numerous studies by Murie. The text, written for the lay person, concerning historic elk range does not extend beyond his conclusions. Regarding Idaho, it denotes that wapiti historically occupied the eastern part of the state in areas adjacent to the mountains in the largest numbers.⁸⁸ For Montana, the book asserts that elk preferred the stream bottoms and river breaks to the flat open plains.⁸⁹ With respect to Wyoming, the text emphasizes that protection saved the elk "because elk herds roamed the plains with the bison, and those not in protected areas were extirpated rapidly by meat and hide hunters and early settlers."⁹⁰ The reader can see that for nearly two centuries literature clarifying that elk survived in the plains and mountains availed itself to the interested researcher. Yet, the myth persists.

In the 1990s, literature concerning the historic range of wapiti continues to be generated and serves as support for arguments over public land management. Dr. Charles Kay, Utah State University, addressed the topic of wapiti range.⁹¹ He made controversial arguments that led him to conclude that wapiti over-inundate the greater Yellowstone ecosystem in general, and Yellowstone National Park in particular. Kay represents one of those "people who study this kind of thing" as referred to in the letter to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*. His arguments warrant careful consideration to prevent their misinterpretation.

Kay insisted that managers of Yellowstone National Park and the National Elk Refuge near Grand Teton National Park made incorrect assessments when they maintained that many thousands of elk historically inhabited these areas. Kay attacked their arguments on three fronts. First, Kay used historic photographs and journals to conclude that wapiti browse species such as berry bushes and willows once flourished due to less animals browsing.⁹² Second, area Native American archeological sites dating back hundreds of years turn up wapiti remains as only three percent of animal remains versus eighty percent domination of Yellowstone today. Third, he tallied elk numbers based on various historical journals of twenty different expeditions in the area from 1835 through 1876.

Kay neglected to consider the wapiti material culture of Native Americans as evidence, and he rejected narratives written after the fact of exploration or circumstantial evidence/questioning, i.e., General Strong's use of Jack Baronette, due to bias toward exaggerating animal numbers in retrospect. Nonetheless, he contended that expeditionaries spent 765 total days in the Yellowstone ecosystem and averaged seeing an elk every 18 days.⁹³ Of course, this analysis also fails to consider the lack of universal abundance as evinced by Errol Nielson of the Idaho Fish and Game Department. Nonetheless, Kay concludes "Today's ungulate population densities do not represent precolumbian [sic] conditions not only in Yellowstone but throughout the Intermountain West."⁹⁴

On the surface it appears that Kay argues against wapiti historically existing as a mountain animal and that his solid methodical research proves that Euramerican settlers certainly drove wapiti off the plains

⁸⁶ Marshall Edson, "Idaho Wildlife in the Early Days," *Idaho Wildlife Review* 16 (July-August 1963), 8-13.

⁸⁷ Brent W. Ritchie, "The Good Old Days," *Idaho Wildlife Review* (Summer 1976), 7.

⁸⁸ Bryant and Maser, "Classification and Distribution," 42.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁹¹ Kay holds a doctorate in wildlife ecology from Utah State University and is currently affiliated with the university's Institute of Political Economy.

⁹² Charles E. Kay, "Aboriginal Overkill: The Role of Native Americans in Structuring Western Ecosystems," *Human Nature* 5 (4, 1994), 361.

⁹³ Charles E. Kay, "Ecosystems Then and Now: A Historical-Ecological Approach to Ecosystem Management," in *Fourth Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Workshop Sharing the Prairies: Sustainable Use of a Vulnerable Landscape* (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1995), 1-5.

⁹⁴ Kay, "Aboriginal Overkill," 372.

and into the mountains. On the contrary, Kay emerges as a leading proponent in support of Murie's historic elk range theory. Kay augments Murie's argument and begs for an explanation in one lengthy quote. He writes:

Based on their archeological experience in western Wyoming, both Frison and Wright conclude that large numbers of elk did not inhabit the mountains in prehistoric times because the species was primarily a plains animal, but this supposition is not supported by ecological data. Biological studies on digestive efficiency, diet breadth, and energetics have all shown that elk are superior competitors to bighorn sheep and mule deer on intermountain winter ranges. Elk will simply outcompete, and outnumber, the smaller ungulates. If elk thrive in the Yellowstone ecosystem and other western mountains today, why were they rare in prehistoric times?⁹⁵

Kay makes it clear that his research indicates that elk prehistorically and historically occupied the mountain ranges, albeit in reduced numbers. He accounts for the low numbers of mountain wapiti with his assessment of the dramatic impact of Native American hunting in the mountains. Kay insists that Native Americans in tandem with predators, namely wolves and bears, decimated mountain elk populations through advantageous harvesting. Indians possessed the technology and desire to take elk whenever possible. They employed drives, traps, dogs, distance weapons such as the bow and atlatl, snowshoes, long distance pursuit, and fire to harvest wapiti. Just as mountain wapiti made easy prey for the market hunters of the 1870s, so, too, did earlier elk prove easy for Native Americans to slay. Kay contended that Native Americans sought large ungulates due to high energy returns for minimal effort and material value. They killed a predominance of prime-age females because those animals yielded fatter meat and more pliable hides. The indigenous hunters did not worry about conserving the species since they could switch to other food sources including animals and plant stuffs. Wolves and bears harvested young and weak elk synergistic to Native American harvesting which kept wapiti populations at minimal levels.⁹⁶

Kay argued that post-Columbian human disease epidemics reduced aboriginal hunter numbers enough to enable elk to initiate a mountain population increase. He uses demographic studies and archeological records to support his contention.⁹⁷ Early explorers such as Osborne Russell became the first Euramericans to witness this expanded population of elk. After Yellowstone became a national park in 1872, predator control commenced. With reduced Native American hunting and

predator pressure combined with eventual protection from Euramerican market hunting, the mountain elk population skyrocketed into the tens of thousands by 1900.⁹⁸ Thus, Kay accounted for the growth of the mountain elk population without giving any credence to the myth that Euramerican settlement drove elk off the high plains into the refuge of the Rocky Mountains.

Elaus Murie possessed the savvy of a sage. Wapiti populations lived and died respectively on the plains or in the mountains with local migration sometimes uniting the two habitats. Charles Kay's sound but complex and controversial work punctuates the voluminous literature of two centuries briefly surveyed here that supports Murie's timeless conclusion. Debunking the myth will require repeated exposure of the reality of historic elk range in both academic and popular literature for several years. The result could be more enlightened big game management and public pressure and lobbying based on historic fact.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 363-364. Kay refers to: G.C. Frison, *Prehistoric Hunters of the High Plains*, 2d ed. (New York: Academic Press, 1991); and G.A. Wright, *People of the High Country: Jackson Hole Before the Settlers* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 365-377.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 380-382.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 360.

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The Founder of Evansville: Casper Builder W. T. Evans

By Jefferson Glass

He was Casper's pioneer building contractor and the man for whom the town of Evansville is named. Yet, William Tranter Evans is largely forgotten, even by residents of the town named for him.

Like many pioneer Wyomingites, Evans was a European immigrant. Born in South Wales on September 29, 1852, he married Elizabeth Caroline Hunt (born in Staffordshire, England, May 3, 1852), at Monmouth, Monmouthshire, South Wales on September 19, 1871.¹ Following their marriage they lived at "Crewis," a rambling stone house on Yeo street, Resolven, Monmouthshire, South Wales, that had been in the Evans family for 150 years. There, Evans worked as a stonemason and the couple soon started their family.²

Their first five children, Clementina Sarah, Beatrice M., William J., Ernest Oliver, and Edgar T. (Ted) were born in Wales.³ In the early 1880s, Elizabeth continued to suffer with illness. Her doctors recommended an ocean trip so the family took a ship to New York in 1882, soon after Edgar's birth.⁴

They arrived in New York City. Although the exact circumstances of this visit are unknown, in 1883, the family settled in York, Nebraska, where later that year daughter Edith was born.⁵ Times were good for them in York, although Evans' occupation there is uncertain. He likely had a farm and probably did some work as a mason.⁶ W.T. and Elizabeth posed for photographs that year.

¹ Evans' birthplace is listed in "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2. Biographical data of Mrs. Evans is from her obituary. "Mrs. E. C. Evans," *Natrona Tribune*, Aug. 23, 1894. Date and place of marriage is from Cora M. Beach, *Women of Wyoming*. (Casper: Hoyer & Co., 1927), 354.

² "Prominent Social, Civic Leader Dies," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Apr. 27, 1952, 1-2; "Last Rites Held Tuesday for Mrs. P. C. Nicolaysen," *Casper Star*, May 2, 1952, 29; "Certified Copy of an Entry of Birth," the General Register Office, London, copy in the Trevor Evans Collection. Trevor Evans is the great-great grandson of William Tranter Evans.

³ Clementina Sarah was born January 16, 1872. Because there are multiple sources stating three different dates for the birth of Clementina Sarah Evans, the author has chosen the date most often used by those sources. Beatrice M. was born in 1873 and William J., in August, 1874. The dates for both are from their tombstones. Highland Park Cemetery, Casper. Ernest Oliver was born Jun. 3, 1880. "Death of Ernest Evans," *Natrona County Tribune*, Aug. 8, 1901, 1. Edgar T. (Ted) was born April 1882.

"Early Pioneer Succumbs Here," *Casper Times*, July 1, 1938, 6.

⁴ "Prominent Social, Civic Leader Dies," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Apr. 27, 1952, 1-2; Beach, 354.

⁵ Beach, 354; Alfred James Mokler, *History of Natrona County Wyoming* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons, 1923), 215.

⁶ Kevin Anderson and Jefferson Glass, "Oral History of William Trevor Evans", interview of the grandson of William Tranter Evans, Mar. 1998, cassette copy held in the Special Collections, Casper College Library.

⁷ Photos are in Trevor Evans Collection. Beach, 354-355.



William Trevor
Evans collection

William Tranter Evans, c. 1922.

Elizabeth's health seemed improved with the climate.⁷ In 1884, another son, Ralph Walter was born, followed the next year by Archibald F. (Arch).⁸

In 1886 Evans and three of the older children went west in a covered wagon. A short time later, Elizabeth and the younger children boarded the train in York with the rest of their belongings. They reunited in western Nebraska, settling in the new town of Grant.⁹ There, they lived on a farm and Evans also worked as a carpenter and a mason.¹⁰ In 1887 eldest daughter Clementina graduated from high school. At the age of 15, she began teaching.¹¹

The next year, news reached Grant that the railroad was coming to Perkins County, Nebraska, but, that it was going to bypass Grant, building a few miles to the south. Not to be deterred, the Grant citizens moved the town to the railroad. Although Evans was not specifically listed as a participant in this venture (few names are mentioned), given his experience in construction, it is likely he was involved.¹² In the early spring of 1889, Evans was laying the brick for the first courthouse in the town of Grant. About that time, another son, Trevor James, was born.¹³

Mrs. Evans had been educated in private schools in England and she wanted her children to have a proper education. She encouraged daughter Clementina to continue her schooling at the normal school in Kearney. While she was away, Evans was building the new brick schoolhouse in Grant, completing the structure in early 1890. Clementina graduated from normal school in June, 1890.¹⁴

That same spring, on April 21, 1890, Emanuel Erben was awarded the contract to construct the new town hall in Casper. He asked Evans to leave Grant and come to Casper to make and lay the brick for this building. Erben did the carpentry. The structure was the first brick building ever to be built in Casper. It was located about midway in the block on the west side of Center street, between First and Second streets.¹⁵

Later that summer, the school district advertised for bids to construct the first schoolhouse in Casper. Erben and his partner Merrian were awarded the contract. Again, they hired Evans to do the masonry.¹⁶ While Evans was in Casper, Elizabeth gave birth to another son, Cecil, in Grant.¹⁷

Late in the year, Evans moved his family to Casper. Elizabeth and the children, except for Clementina, arrived in Casper just before Christmas of 1890.¹⁸ Clementina stayed in Nebraska to finish her school work there. When the term ended, she came to Casper aboard one of the earliest passenger trains, arriving on January 3, 1891.¹⁹



Phil Roberts collection

Center Street, Casper, 1890, the year Evans came to Casper.

⁸ Ralph's date of birth is from the cemetery records of Natrona County, Special Collections, Casper College Library. Arch's birthdate is from "Death Claims A. F. Evans, Old Resident Here," *Casper Daily Tribune*, Jun. 23, 1926, 4.

⁹ "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2; Anderson and Glass interview.

¹⁰ Anderson and Glass interview.

¹¹ "Last Rites Held Tuesday for Mrs. P. C. Nicolaysen," *Casper Star*, May 2, 1952, 29.

¹² Telephone interviews of Robert Richter, March and April, 1998. Richter is author of *100 Years in Grant*, (Grant: Perkins County Historical Society, 1986).

¹³ Trevor James Evans was born in Grant on March 22, 1889. See "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2, for reference to Evans' work on the Grant courthouse. The building still stands and is in use commercially. Richter interviews.

¹⁴ Beach, 354, 356. The Evans' posed for a family photograph sometime that summer in Grant, before Clementina left for school. The photo is in the Trevor Evans collection.

¹⁵ Mokler, 169. The bell, that had been used as a community fire alarm, was removed with the copula after a fire in the building when the building was known as the Bell Theater. The bell is now housed at the Fort Casper Museum. The structure is still standing and has been in continuous use, housing several businesses since its retirement from public service. Casper Zonta Club, ed., *Casper Chronicles* (Casper: Zonta Club and Mountain States Lithography, c. 1964), 59.

¹⁶ Mokler, 211. Bids were advertised in August of 1890.

¹⁷ Cecil's birthdate and place is listed in cemetery records of Natrona County, Special Collections, Casper College Library.

¹⁸ "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2.

¹⁹ "Prominent Social, Civic Leader Dies," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, April 27, 1952, 1-2; Beach, 356.

Two weeks later, when "Old Central" (as the school would come to be known) opened the doors to its first students, Clementina became the first teacher in the new school.²⁰ Clementina and the principal, J. C. Williams, made up the entire staff. They held classes in the two upstairs rooms. The two lower rooms were left unfinished until the fall of 1894.²¹

In order that bricks could be produced locally, Evans established a clay mine seven miles west of Casper on the Gothberg ranch. The clay was brought back to the outskirts of Casper by wagon. There, it was cleaned, processed, molded into shape, dried, and fired to produce finished bricks. It is not known how many people Evans employed during his many years of construction around Casper, but building with brick is a labor intensive method of construction. What is known of Evans' workforce is that it included all of his sons at one time or another.²²

In 1891, the Evans family was establishing a new home in Casper and Evans was making a comfortable living in a town that needed his skills. There was work enough for his sons, and his daughters were probably the "talk of the town." Elizabeth, born and educated in a world far different than that of a frontier town, believed Casper was seriously lacking a proper church. The "community tabernacle," served as courtroom, school, and meeting hall. To Elizabeth, it just did not fill the bill. There was need for a church building. The only Episcopalians in Casper in 1891, the Evans contacted Bishop Ethelbert Talbot, who had been assigned to the missionary diocese that included most of Wyoming. When Bishop Talbot arrived in Casper he analyzed the place and then went to every saloon in town, requesting donations from the proprietors and customers. Soon, he had raised a considerable amount of cash toward the sum that would be needed. Meanwhile, Elizabeth solicited donations from leading businessmen and, soon, they had the capital needed to begin construction.²³

Evans, hired as contractor, began construction of the framed St. Mark's Episcopal Church on the corner of what is now Second and Wolcott streets.²⁴ The building was completed on Oct. 27, 1891. The Evans family spent most of that night cleaning and furnishing it because Clementina was to be married in it the next day. There, on Oct. 28, 1891, she married Peter C. Nicolaysen.²⁵

In those early years, the Evans family made up the entire choir for St. Mark's Church. Elizabeth, trained in music, had what was described as a beautiful soprano voice. She would be joined by W.T., Beatrice,

and William J., while Clementina accompanied the choir on the organ.²⁶

That first St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Casper, built by W.T. Evans, was moved twice and had an addition built on it. It is now located at the Central Wyoming Fairgrounds.²⁷

Clementina's husband, P.C. Nicolaysen, already was a well-known Casper businessman. Born in Denmark on July 7, 1863, he had come to the "Old Town" of Casper in late spring or early summer of 1888. There, he was listed as a businessman before Casper was moved to its new location. In November of 1888, Nicolaysen's "Stock Exchange" saloon opened in the "New Town" of Casper. When W.S. Kimball published the first issue of the *Wyoming Derrick* on May 21, 1890, P. C. Nicolaysen was one of his partners.²⁸

Evans, in partnership with his new son-in-law, constructed a four-room brick home for the new bride and groom at the corner of First and Wolcott streets. Although not large by later standards, it was one of the three largest homes in Casper at that time and the first to be built from brick. The Nicolaysens lived there for more than 30 years.²⁹

Soon after the marriage of their eldest child, Elizabeth gave birth to Herbert O., the first Evans to be born in Wyoming and the last child born to W.T. and Eliza-

²⁰ The school opened January 20, 1891. *Casper Chronicles*, 24.

²¹ Mokler, 211-212.

²² Later generations that knew them recall the sons reminiscing of many hot summer days firing their father's brick kilns. Anderson and Glass interview.

²³ Some of the contributors were George Mitchell, mayor of Casper; A. J. Cunningham, manager of C.H. King Company; rancher B. B. Brooks; P.C. Nicolaysen, and W. S. Kimball. Robert David, "History of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming," unpublished manuscript, David Historical Collection, Special Collections, Casper College Library. During the time that the funds were being raised, Elizabeth was involved in numerous church endeavors. In May, she founded St. Mark's Episcopal Guild, Casper's first women's organization and the foundation for many others in later years. Clementina, who had been teaching Summer School in Bessemer, established Casper's first community Sunday School at the new town hall. With the Sunday School as sponsor, she organized the biggest Fourth of July celebration the area had ever seen to that time. Beach, 354. 356; Mokler, 221; David.

²⁴ *Casper Chronicles*, 19; map, "Casper, Natrona County, Wyo." Sanhorn-Perris Map Co., c. May, 1894.

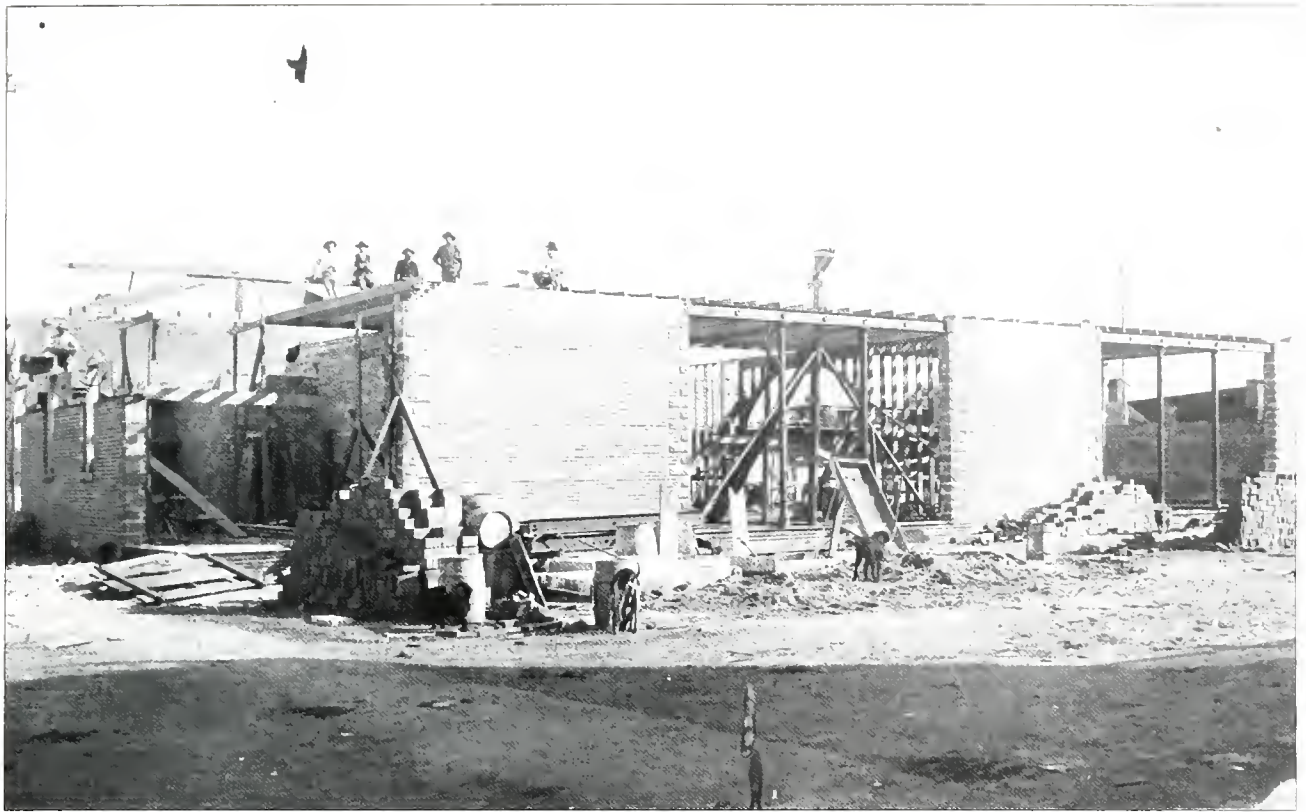
²⁵ Beach, 354.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Casper Chronicles*, 19. A photograph, in the Trevor Evans collection, taken shortly after the church was completed looks much like the building today.

²⁸ Beach, 358; Mokler, 30, 116-117.

²⁹ Beach, 358.



Evans' work crew constructing the Richards and Cunningham building, corner of 2nd and Center streets, Casper, 1894. Evans is wearing the vest, (top, second from left). William Trevor Evans collection.

beth.³⁰ The next year, their first granddaughter, Elizabeth Maren Nicolaysen, was born on July 2, 1892.³¹ Less than a month later, on August 1, contractor Evans was awarded the contract to construct the new City/County Jail on the west side of David street, between what is now Second and Midwest streets.³²

While Evans' career as a contractor was thriving, a series of tragedies befall in the family in the following two years. On Sept. 11, 1892, daughter Beatrice, died at the age of 19.³³ Joy replaced grief temporarily with the birth of grandchild Edith Beulah Nicolaysen on July 30, 1893. The happiness proved to be short-lived. Both Nicolaysen children died that September.³⁴ Just four months later, Evans' son Herbert died, followed by son Cecil in May, 1894.³⁵

About the time of Herbert's death, the bank of Richards, Cunningham, and Company merged with the C. H. King and Company bank. Evans was hired to construct their new building.³⁶ During the construction of the bank structure, Evans purchased the lot that once had been occupied by Lou Polk's infamous dancehall. There, he tried to help ease his family's pain, by building for them a comfortable new frame house that he later veneered with brick.³⁷ Before the house was finished, Elizabeth contracted blood poisoning and died on August 21, 1894.³⁸

Despite the personal loss, Evans continued to build. Early in 1895, he contracted to do the masonry work for the new Pennsylvania Oil Company refinery being built on Center street, just south of the railroad tracks in Casper.³⁹ The refinery went into production March 5, 1895, and continued until the summer of 1907, the same period in which Evans become established and accepted as a prominent builder and mason. Over the

³⁰ "Mrs. E. C. Evans," *Natrona Tribune*, Aug. 23, 1894.

³¹ Beach, 358.

³² David, "History of the Episcopal Church"; "Casper, Natrona Co.," Sanborn map; Mokler, 123. The building was to the rear of the lot that is now occupied by the firehall.

³³ Date is from Beatrice's tombstone, Highland Park Cemetery, Casper.

³⁴ Beach, 358.

³⁵ Tombstone in Highland Park Cemetery, Casper, lists date of death as Feb. 15, 1894.

³⁶ Mokler, 24.

³⁷ *Casper Chronicles*, 43; Mokler, 429.

³⁸ "Mrs. E. C. Evans," *Natrona Tribune*, Aug. 23, 1894. Granddaughter Beatrice Maren Nicolaysen was born two months later on October 26.

³⁹ Mokler, 247-250; *Casper Chronicles*, 61-62. Few people in the Casper area are aware that this refinery ever existed, not to mention that it was the first refinery in Wyoming. It was not very large and produced only lubricants from crude oil brought in on tank wagons with string teams from the Salt Creek oil fields.



Evans enjoyed this outing to Bates Hole, south of Casper, in 1923. William Trevor Evans collection.



Casper's first town hall, constructed by Evans in 1890, pictured when in use as the Bell Theater, c. 1912.



Evans aboard an ostrich at Cawston Ostrich Farm in California in 1913. Evans was so fascinated by the huge birds that he started raising them in Wyoming. William Trevor Evans collection.

next few years, he was contractor for several buildings in the Casper business district, including most commercial buildings in the Rohrbaugh and Smith blocks and many in the Richards and Cunningham block.⁴⁰

In 1898 the United States became involved in the Spanish-American War. William J. Evans, although born in Wales, enlisted in the Wyoming battalion and was mustered into service at Cheyenne. On May 18, 1898, his unit boarded a San Francisco-bound train, enroute to Manila.⁴¹ Released from duty at the end of the war, he returned to work in Casper.⁴²

Early in 1900, Ms. Wealthy Stanley moved to Casper from Hay Springs, Nebraska. Born in Iowa in November, 1853, she soon caught the eye of widower Evans.⁴³ His daughter Edith was in her first year of teaching 5th and 6th graders at old Central and Ernest Evans was convalescing from pleurisy at the home of his sister, Clementina, when W.T. and Wealthy were married in November after a brief courtship.⁴⁴ Ernest's illness had not been considered serious, though it had been disabling. Suddenly, however, his condition worsened and he died on August 4, 1901.⁴⁵

Four years later, on December 19, 1905, Evans filed for a homestead patent on a parcel of land three miles east of Casper where he and wife Wealthy started a small ranch. In addition to the homestead, he leased several hundred acres from the State.⁴⁶ He built a comfortable frame house and a carriage house, that included a bunkhouse. During a remodeling project several years ago, it was discovered that he had insulated the walls of the house with brick. The house is standing.⁴⁷

In 1906 the framed Episcopal chapel Evans had built fifteen years earlier was moved to the rear of the lot at the corner of Second and Wolcott streets. On the site, Evans began construction of a beautiful brick St. Mark's Episcopal Church.⁴⁸

Early the next year, while the church was still under construction, Evans contracted with Marvin L. Bishop, Sr., to build Casper's first brick mansion. Bishop knew exactly what he wanted--a replica of his childhood home in the Shenandoah Valley. Bishop selected a lot at 818 East Second Street which, at the time, was a short distance east of town. He then drew some sketches from memory of the home he had loved as a boy. A plan was drawn and Evans began the work. The result was a beautiful, high-ceiling, southern-style mansion. Built of a traditional red brick, it boasted white shutters and tall white pillars supporting the portico. The home still stands at the same location today and, at last report, was still occupied by members of the Bishop family.⁴⁹

In 1907 Evans was fifty-five years old. In that era, he had already surpassed the average man's life ex-

pectancy. At this late age he built what, even by today's standards, would be considered a sumptuous house and a large church, both out of brick, in just over a year. The church was completed and first services were held in it on November 27, 1907.⁵⁰ At the same time, Evans continued to operate his ranch.

At the beginning of the next decade, Evans still was working as a stonemason and plasterer.⁵¹ On April 24,

⁴⁰ "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, Succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2. Many members of the community (especially children) had suffered illness and even death as a result of drinking polluted water from the wells in and around Casper. The governing body of the town had unsuccessfully tried to establish a clean and reliable drinking water supply for several years. In late November and early December of 1895, a diphtheria epidemic struck Casper. Most families that could afford to do so took their children from Casper before a quarantine was imposed. The quarantine was lifted in February of 1896. On May 26, 1896, Casper's first public water system went into operation. The epidemic evidently provided the urgency needed to get approval to implement the project. Evans again became a grandfather in August of 1896 when Cecil Evans Nicolaysen was born, on the fourteenth of that month. Beach, 358.

⁴¹ "Death Claims Former Resident," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, May 21, 1945, 2. On July 8th, the Nicolaysen family increased by one with the birth of their second son, Peter C., Jr. Beach, 358. In his first month in the world, his uncle, William J., was engaged in the battle of Manila. Mokler, 52.

⁴² Early in 1899, W. T. Evans and Peter C. Nicolaysen, Arch, Ted, Ralph and Trevor James Evans, Cecil Nicolaysen and Peter C. Nicolaysen, Jr., posed for a photograph of the "men of the family," in Casper. William J. Evans was absent from this photograph, but on July 6, 1899, he received his orders to return to the United States. In 1900 and 1901 he and W.T. Evans were both listed as members of the Casper Volunteer Fire Department. Mokler, 62, 155.

⁴³ "Scarf Caught in Wringer is Fatal to Aged Casper Woman," *Casper Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1927.

⁴⁴ Mokler, 215; "Death of Ernest Evans," *Natrona County Tribune*, Aug. 8, 1901, 1; "Scarf Caught in Wringer is Fatal to Aged Casper Woman," *Casper Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1927. Edith continued teaching, but in the primary grades from 1900 and 1901. Mokler, 216-217.

⁴⁵ "Death of Ernest Evans." In 1903 Trevor James Evans posed for a portrait with a Casper photographer and William Custer Nicolaysen was born on July 24th of that year.

⁴⁶ *Tract Record Book*, U. S. Land Office, Douglas, Wyoming, Department of the Interior, 56; Anderson and Glass interview.

⁴⁷ Trevor Evans interviewed by Jefferson Glass, March, 1998. The house is located at 484 Evans Street in Evansville, Wyoming. Evans' great-great grandson, Trevor Evans, resides there. During remodeling, the carriage house has been converted into a garage, but it still looks very much the same as it did when it was built more than ninety years ago.

⁴⁸ Robert David manuscript.

⁴⁹ *Casper Chronicles*, 63.

⁵⁰ Robert David manuscript. Two years later, on December 1, 1909, Gerald Clifford Nicolaysen was born, the seventh and last child to P. C. and Clementina. Beach, 358.

⁵¹ *Wyoming State Business Directory*, 1910-11, 159.

1911, he was issued the patent on his homestead. Two years later, he applied for a homestead patent on an additional 160 acres adjoining his ranch.⁵² It was about this period that Evans' occupation began appearing in the directories as "rancher" instead of "stonemason."

In 1921, Evans at the age of sixty-nine, retired as a mason and began living the life of a gentleman rancher.⁵³ He had built a large portion of the City of Casper and helped it grow from a rough-hewn array of assorted structures, plopped in the middle of a vast prairie into a prosperous and organized business district, surrounded by a pleasant and comfortable residential neighborhood. He had lived in Casper nearly half of his life. In the fall of 1921, he watched as the old City/County jail was torn down. It had been one of the first major structures he had built in his new home town.⁵⁴

Casper was gaining increasing interest as an oil refining town in 1922 and Evans was about to participate in the growth. The Wyoming Refining Company had previously purchased land to build a new refinery adjacent to Evans' ranch, but for unknown reasons this plan never materialized. The Texas Oil Company, planning a refinery near Glenrock, was also considering the site east of Casper.

Speculating on the possibility that the Texas Company would build, Guaranteed Investment Company of Casper negotiated a real estate venture with Evans for portions of his land. On March 15, 1922, the firm dedicated the town of Evansville, Wyoming, consisting of 122 lots.⁵⁵ The town was named for landowner, pioneer contractor and rancher W. T. Evans.

The Texas Oil Company eventually agreed to locate on the Evansville site but they needed more land than was available with the Wyoming Refining property. On July 7, 1922, the Evans Realty Company donated the required 120 acres and on July 25, builders began construction.⁵⁶ By July 29, the foundations for the stills and the stacks were already in place, and it was noted that construction would be rapid.⁵⁷

By August 10, 1922, all of the lots in Evansville were sold and an additional 137 lots were platted.⁵⁸ In September, the water company was incorporated, with \$100,000 in capital. Shortly after the refinery went into operation, the company began providing gas utilities to the public. By fall, all of the lots in the first addition had been sold and 82 more lots were platted in a second addition.⁵⁹

The named streets of Evansville at this time were Texas, Williams, King, Evans, and Leavitt streets, all running north and south. East/west streets were the Yellowstone highway and First through Fifth streets.

In those days, the main street of Evansville was Evans street. Most of the business district occupied both sides of this street from the Yellowstone Highway to about third street.⁶⁰ Late in 1922 several businesses already had opened including the Evansville Garage and Grocery, three pool-halls, three restaurants, two grocery stores, a 'gentleman's furnishings' store, three boarding houses, a furniture and hardware store, a second-hand store, a barbershop, a lumber yard and a church. Both railroads also expressed intentions of erecting stations there.⁶¹

The town's first school, held in the Baptist Church, opened for classes on January 2, 1923. The next month, the refinery first fired the stills, beginning to process about 6,000 barrels of petroleum per day and with a monthly payroll of about \$60,000.⁶²

By early 1923, the population of Evansville was 289 living in about sixty homes and shopping in twenty businesses. The town had one church, electric lights, telephones, and a modern water system.⁶³ On May 15, 1923, the Town of Evansville became an incorporated municipality.⁶⁴

Less than nine months later, on February 3, 1924, the town of Evansville was reported to have had a population of 300. A reporter predicted that the population

⁵² *Tract Record Book*. This new acreage was patented on September 15, 1916. He applied on June 11, 1913. Just a month earlier, on May 3, 1913, his eldest grandson, Cecil Nicolaysen, died at the age of 16. His eldest granddaughter, Beatrice, married Neal Avery Tyler on Dec. 31, 1916. Beach, 358.

⁵³ His ranch appeared on the first map drawn of Natrona County. "Map of Natrona County, Wyoming," (Casper: Wheeler and Worthington, Civil Engineers, 1921). The map is held in the Natrona County Surveyor's office.

⁵⁴ Mokler, 123, 202a.

⁵⁵ "Guaranteed Investment Co. Is Big Bond House and Realty Firm Here," *Casper Sunday Morning Tribune*, July 22, 1923.

⁵⁶ Mokler, 256.

⁵⁷ "Work Progressing on New Plant of Texas Oil Co.," *Wyoming Weekly Review and Natrona County Tribune*, July 29, 1922, 5.

⁵⁸ Mokler, 240.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Anderson and Glass, interview of William Trevor Evans.

⁶¹ Mokler, 241.

⁶² Mokler, 257.

⁶³ *Business and Professional Directory of Casper, Wyoming*, 1923, 53-55. Some of the Evansville advertisers in the 1923 City Directory were Guaranteed Investment Company (Casper and Evansville); the Tubbs Building ("centrally located in Evansville/First Class Restaurant & up to Date Pool Hall"), E.T. Foe Lumber & Hardware Co.; American Cafe ("At the Gate to the Texas Refinery"); Evansville Garage; Roof's Cafe & Bakery; Beeman Mercantile Co.; and F.H. Banta & Co., Real Estate.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

soon would double.⁶⁵ This reporter's estimation of growth was overly optimistic, but the town did grow. Soon, the Evansville school was built. Without the support of the school district, however, it was forced to close after about a decade.⁶⁶

Archibald, Evans' son, started a sheep ranch on Cole Creek, east of Evansville, in partnership with his brother-in-law, P. C. Nicolaysen. In 1926 he contracted tick fever. While convalescing from the illness, he developed pneumonia and died that June.⁶⁷ Less than a year later, Evans' wife Wealthy was killed in a most unusual accident. On May 12, 1927, while she was doing the family laundry, her shawl was caught in the electric wringer of her washing machine. She had managed to unplug the machine, but it was too late to stop the momentum of the apparatus. She was strangled.⁶⁸

On October 12, 1929, William Tranter Evans died in his home in Evansville from natural causes. He was seventy-seven years old. His obituary described him as a wealthy Natrona County pioneer and contractor who was instrumental in the building of Casper. Although he was a member of a few organizations (in his later years, he was a member of both the Elks and Moose lodges of Casper), he was deeply involved in the Episcopal Church, serving as a vestryman of St. Mark's most of his life.⁶⁹

He was an avid big-game hunter and an exceptionally accomplished bird hunter. He loved birds in general. He imported a variety of European game birds that he raised and periodically released on his ranch to hunt. He raised ostriches--one of the first in this country to raise the exotic species.⁷⁰ (See photograph of Evans riding an ostrich, page 25).

He also liked to play tennis. This was a sport he probably had learned and enjoyed in Wales. When courts were built in the Casper area, he took it up again.⁷¹ Foremost in all of his activities, he built.

At the time W. T. Evans erected many of the structures in Casper, he probably never dreamed of the im-

pact such work would have on the Casper area community. Few people recognize history in the making. He built the businesses, churches, schools and public buildings. W.T. Evans was a builder of more than just buildings. He built more than houses. He built homes and a community.

⁶⁵ "Mills and Evansville Prosper as a Result of Industry," *Casper Daily Tribune*, Feb. 3, 1924, 7.

⁶⁶ The old schoolhouse that stood for many years on Curtis street, was used as a Town Hall for some years, and hosted many town dances. The building eventually began to deteriorate and, finally, was condemned. Many residents tried to raise the money needed to restore the old school, but were unsuccessful. The building was torn down in 1983. Anderson and Glass, interview of William Trevor Evans; Joyce Hill, Evansville Town Clerk (retired).

⁶⁷ "Death Claims A. F. Evans, Old Resident Here," *Casper Daily Tribune*, June 23, 1926, 4.

⁶⁸ "Scarf Caught in Wringer is Fatal to Aged Casper Woman," *Casper Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1927. After a memorial service in Casper, W.T., accompanied by (Clementina and Edith, took her body to Hay Springs, Nebraska to be buried in her family plot.

⁶⁹ "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, succumbs," *Casper Tribune-Herald*, Oct. 13, 1929, 1-2.

⁷⁰ Anderson and Glass, interview of William Trevor Evans. There are no documents to indicate how successful this ostrich venture might have been.

⁷¹ "W. T. Evans, 77, Pioneer Contractor, Succumbs."

Jefferson Glass is chairman of the Evansville Historical Commission. He recently began writing the biography of Jean Baptiste Richard (John Reshaw), 1810-1876, a prominent trader on the North Platte for some 40 years. This article was written in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Town of Evansville (May 15, 1998).

Memories of Wyoming Teacher Wana Clay Olson

The following is a transcript of a presentation made by Wana Clay Olson, a long-time Albany County educator. At the age of 100, she was the oldest presenter at the American Heritage Center's seventh annual symposium in September, 1998.

Titled "Schoolmarms and Scholars: Women Educators of the American West," the conference included discussions about the lives and careers of Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, Wyoming historian and long-time UW faculty member, and June Etta Downey, a UW psychology professor for many years. Dr. Glenda Riley, noted western historian, gave the keynote address on "Women Educators Civilizing the West."

A symposium highlight was the panel of retired Albany County school teachers, including Olson, Eva Bradshaw and Eunice Foster, reminiscing about their many experiences.

Education was originally a family affair. Children were taught at home by a family member to read, write, spell and cipher, now known as arithmetic. This is the way it was until a professional teacher was employed and a school was built.

I was born and raised near the town of Canton in northeast Missouri. The first organized school in our community was the Allen School. Many descendants of the family attended including my generation of Millers and Schraders.

My uncle, Jody Miller, who was born in 1862, attended Allen School. This one- room log cabin had seats made from logs which were split and smoothed and the school was heated with wood. The schoolyard was a wonderful playground with no playground equipment at all.

There was no course of study so most of the students studied what they wanted. Jody Miller learned all the mathematics available but not as much spelling and grammar.

When my brother, Wayne, and I started to school about 1905, the Missouri schools were not standardized which means there were no first, second, or third grades. Rather, we went by the "Reader". If you used a certain book during your fifth year you said, "I am in the Fifth Reader" not the fifth grade.

Wayne and I attended Allen School for eight years. We had two teachers during that time that had attended a school of higher learning. After completing all the Readers at the Allen School there was talk of us going to Canton to high school. It was decided Wayne and I were too young to go to Canton to high school to be entirely on our own for weeks and weeks at a time. With only horse-drawn vehicles, a trip to Canton was usually a two-day ride.

It was finally decided that we should go to the Providence School several miles west where Mr. Lemon was a teacher well-qualified to teach high school subjects. I remember Ancient History, Civics, Advanced Arithmetic, and English. We had a great year but when we went to Canton High School the following year, no credit was given for our year's work as these classes were not certified by Canton High School.

As teacher training had been established at Canton High, I was so happy to enter the classes for we were assured we would qualify for teaching the next year. I completed the classwork and began teaching our own Allen School September 1, 1918, when I was twenty years old. Seventeen children enrolled, including Freddie, Emma, and Ella, my younger brother and sisters.

It was during this first year of teaching that my family moved to Wyoming. I was unable to travel with them as I had to finish my term so I moved to a neighbor's to board and room until school was out. I arrived in Wyoming the middle of June, 1919.



AHC photograph by Rick Walters

Wana Clay Olson, author of this article, is pictured in front, seated. This article is a transcript of her presentation at the American Heritage Center symposium in September. Other panelists were retired teachers Eva Bradshaw (left) and Eunice Foster (right). Session moderator was Dr. Andrew Gulliford (center), author and history professor in Tennessee, who is a specialist on the history of rural schools in the West.

A turning point in Wyoming education was when State Representative John A. Stephenson of Tie Siding introduced a bill allocating a percentage of the Wyoming oil dollars to education. When this bill passed, teacher salaries raised immediately from \$50 to \$100 a month and "people began coming to Wyoming by the herds." Like myself, some teachers were not adequately prepared, so to become eligible for the Wyoming position, I went to summer school at the University of Wyoming and began my career in Wyoming education in the fall of 1919.

My first teaching experience was probably made unique because of the bedbugs. The position was on a ranch forty miles northwest of Laramie, near Quealy Dome. The conditions here were so bad that other teachers refused to take a position there.

The kids hadn't had school for two years and the place looked so forlorn. The children peeped around at me like rabbits.

The school and teacher quarters were in an old log two-room bunk house. The building wasn't too bad—the bed had been freshly made and the cabin had been well swept. (I even remember what I wore... my new blue serge suit bound with satin piping. It was lovely but not exactly appropriate for country school teaching). I unpacked my trunk and hung up my beautiful new clothes.

I met the lady of the house and visited with my new pupils. When someone said, "Don't let the bedbugs bite," I hurried back to my quarters to learn that indeed there were bedbugs—not only in the bed, but in my dresses, corsets, and the new blue serge suit. That first night I slept with the fifteen-year old daughter and the bed bugs bit all night. I kept thinking about that beautiful new suit hanging against the wall.

The bitter winter cold got rid of most of them just as it froze the water in the bedside bowl and pitcher.

We held school from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and I stayed seven

months. I was a very, very demanding teacher. "That old woman would just kill you if you missed a word." I remember one of the children saying. We did one and a half years of school in that seven- month period.

And for that I received a salary of \$90 a month, from which I paid the parents of the family I was teaching \$45 in board and room. They fed me antelope and potatoes and when I complained about the food to my Dad, he said, "You look all right to me."

In those days it was often impossible to get to town for months. Teachers were not willing to sign contracts to live the good part of a year in isolation. The main attraction of ranches was to meet and marry a cowboy. There was a ranch party where, as the new teacher, I was welcomed with blasts from shotguns and where everyone danced until daylight.

In the country school, a part of my contract was the janitorial work: sweeping, dusting up the classroom, and scrubbing the outhouse. Also, before the children arrived in the morning, I would get the heater going but we often studied together huddled in our coats.

After my first teaching position near Quealy Dome, I returned to Missouri to marry my high school sweetheart, Carroll Clay, and raise a family. Following his early death, I returned to Wyoming with four boys in the fall of 1927 only to discover that teacher qualifications had doubled. My mother assisted in the care of

my four boys in order that I might resume my education. I attended University classes and after much effort and determination, received my Normal Diploma or two-year certificate in the fall of 1932. This is also the year that I was elected County Superintendent of Schools, an office I held until 1936. It would be ten years after this time that I proudly finished my four-year college degree.

Teaching in the country schools, whether then or now, is a challenging and rewarding occupation. One has to be versatile, tough, creative.

At one country school, I developed a simple hot lunch program. I told all of my pupils to bring what canned vegetables they could, mixed it together, stoked up the pot-bellied stove and we had a good stew every noon. If times were hard, it was bean soup but always with a bit of side pork and onion.

Thirty-nine of my 100 years has been devoted to education. And it all started with that small, log building, Allen School. From a small country school teacher to the County Superintendent of Schools to the Director of Special Education to classroom teaching--I have been and always will be a teacher. Some of those years was like a good stew and some was bean soup. But it is a journey I will always cherish.

--Wana Clay Olson

If you have a "Wyoming memory" you would like to share with Annals readers, contact Phil Roberts, Annals of Wyoming, Department of History, University of Wyoming, Laramie WY 82071. A "first-hand" account for inclusion in this feature requires no footnoting or particular writing style, but must be a non-fiction story with a Wyoming connection. Submissions should be no longer than six typewritten pages, typed double-spaced.

Thomas Harrison and the Search for Oil in Northwest Wyoming, 1908-1916

By Mike Mackey

On November 14, 1908, Thomas S. Harrison wandered into Oregon Basin eight miles southeast of Cody, Wyoming. Harrison's job as an Inspector of Mines for the General Land Office in Cheyenne was to inspect the coal mine and Carey Act irrigation project of Solon Wiley. His true love, however, was the science of geology and its use in petroleum exploration. In that field he would make a career and national reputation. Oregon Basin would play a key role in that career.

Harrison, born in Evansville, Indiana, on August 27, 1881, attended Indiana University at Bloomington from 1900 to 1902 before deciding to move west to continue his studies in Colorado.¹ He completed his undergraduate work at Denver University in 1904 and received his engineering degree from the Colorado School of Mines at Golden in 1908.² While attending the School of Mines, Harrison worked the summer months of 1905 and 1906 as a tool dresser on a cable-

tool rig near Florence, Colorado. Harrison admitted that he was perhaps, "the world's worst tool dresser."³ But working in the oil fields gave Harrison some practical experience to go along with his schooling. It was during that time that he had often heard the Stock brothers, who were drilling near Florence, discussing the rumors of new oil prospects in Wyoming.⁴ Such talk contributed to Harrison's interest in Wyoming and the possibility that he may locate some important oil fields himself.

¹ Thomas Harrison diary for 1908, Thomas S. Harrison Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (here after cited as THC). *Casper Tribune-Herald*, March 31, 1957.

² Biography of Thomas S. Harrison, Ed N. Harrison Collection, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Camarillo, California.

³ Thomas S. Harrison, "Oil and Gas Prospects in the Rockies," *The Mines Magazine*, September 1944, 490.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 490.



The "Cliffs Ranch" in Oregon Basin, 1910.

In June of 1908, shortly after graduating from the School of Mines, Thomas Harrison accepted a position with the Department of the Interior's General Land office in Cheyenne, Wyoming. His job of inspecting coal mines and irrigation projects, gave Harrison the opportunity to carry out geological studies in the field while traveling throughout the state. In October of 1908 Harrison left Cheyenne on his first trip to the Big Horn Basin in northwest Wyoming. Traveling north from Thermopolis, Harrison passed through Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin on his way to Cody. In mid-November he visited the Wiley ranch at Oregon Basin and inspected S. L. Wiley's coal mine and irrigation project. It was also on this trip that Harrison met Wiley's daughter Ruth.⁵ He was unaware at the time, but the Wiley ranch in Oregon Basin would be the site where he would start his family and where he would initiate his search for oil in Wyoming.

After completing his inspections in Oregon Basin, Harrison returned to Cheyenne. Shortly after arriving at the capital, he decided to take a Civil Service exam in an effort to secure a better paying position with the government. Early in 1909, after successfully passing the exam, Thomas Harrison was promoted and named Mineral Inspector in Wyoming. He noted in his diary that the new position provided "an experience with Wyoming geology . . . of tremendous value."⁶

Harrison's first assignment as mineral inspector in 1909 was in the Salt Creek oil field north of Casper where Joseph H. Lobell was trying to persuade the United States government to set aside a square block of land, 100 miles by 100 miles with Salt Creek at its center, for oil exploration.⁷ Lobell, a sometime lawyer and all-time promoter, was described by historian Gene Gressley as "one of the most contriving charlatans ever to enter the Salt Creek locale."⁸ In 1907 Lobell sold placer claims, filed over numerous other claims on the same ground, to a Dutch investment group. In August 1908 the Dutch company, Wyoming Maatschappij, hired James and Hugh "Daddy" Stock to drill a well at Salt Creek. Dr. Cesare Porro, a famous Italian geologist, chose the location. On October 16, 1908, while Harrison was making his way toward the Big Horn Basin, the Stock's brought in the "Big Dutch" well with oil gushing over the crown of the drilling rig.⁹

By the time Harrison arrived at Salt Creek in April of 1909, the Lobell problem had solved itself. Once the Dutch well was brought in and Lobell fully realized the oil producing potential of the area, he tried to gain control of the field and the surrounding land with government approval. However, tiring of Lobell's maneuvering, Wyoming Maatschappij bought out

Lobell's stock and released him from his financial indebtedness. Lobell walked away with more than \$100,000 in cash but spent the next decade bringing suit against nearly every company which carried out exploration work in the Salt Creek area.¹⁰

Even though the Lobell problem had been solved, Harrison's trip to Salt Creek was not wasted. During his time at Salt Creek, Harrison asked numerous questions concerning the Dutch well and made an exhaustive geological study of the area. He compared the area to the geologic formations he had seen six months earlier at Grass Creek, Little Buffalo Basin, and, particularly, Oregon Basin. With so many similarities, Harrison was sure there was a strong possibility of finding oil at the latter locations. At the Dutch well, oil seeped from the ground in a fifty-foot radius around it. Oil from the well flowed into a pit each day to relieve the pressure.¹¹ Such a oil strike fueled Harrison's excitement of the oil possibilities in the Big Horn Basin.

Following his observations at Salt Creek, Harrison wrote to S. L. Wiley at the Cliffs Ranch in Oregon Basin. Wiley's backers in the Oregon Basin irrigation project were getting nervous about the rising costs and some were backing out. Harrison was concerned that Wiley might give up and return to the family home in Omaha, Nebraska. With that in mind, Harrison wrote a letter encouraging Wiley to hold on to the Oregon Basin property. Harrison wrote that he was sure oil would be discovered there. He even outlined for Wiley the proper procedure for filing placer claims. Harrison did not want his name listed on any claims filed since it would cause a conflict of interest with his position as

⁵ Harrison diary for 1908, THC. Thomas Harrison affidavit, Charles W. Burdick collection (CBC), American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁶ Harrison diaries for 1908 and 1909, THC.

⁷ Harrison diaries for 1908 and 1909, THC. Thomas S. Harrison, "The Oil and Gas Record Within the Rocky Mountains," *Oil Reporter*, December 25, 1945, 3. Harrison affidavit, CBC.

⁸ Gene M. Gressley, *The Twentieth-Century American West: A Potpourri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1977), 51.

⁹ Gressley, 59-65. Harrison, "The Oil and Gas Record," 3. Harold D. Roberts, *Salt Creek Wyoming: The Story of a Great Oil Field* (Denver: W. H. Kistler Stationery Company, 1965), 35-39. Mike Mackey, *Black Gold: Patterns in the Development of Wyoming's Oil Industry* (Powell: Western History Publications, 1997), 17-29. Wilson O. Clough, "Portrait in Oil: The Belgo American Company in Wyoming," *Annals of Wyoming*, (April 1969), 30.

¹⁰ Harrison diary for 1909, THC. Gressley, *Twentieth-Century American West*, 64-65. Harrison, "Oil and Gas Prospects," 491.

¹¹ Harrison diaries for 1909, THC. Harrison, "Oil and Gas Prospects," 491.

Minerals Inspector, however, he said he saw "no reason why I might not at some future time accept, as a reward of appreciation, a position."¹²

It was also at Salt Creek that Harrison was made aware of a problem which would plague Wyoming's oil industry for another forty-three years. While in Casper, on a trip to town from the field, Harrison met a young man named Emery, the son of a Pennsylvania oil producer. Emery had traveled to Wyoming to investigate the stories of the Dutch well and inspect Salt Creek for possible development by his father. Harrison asked the young man's opinion of the field. Emery said he "was going back . . . to report to his father that never had he seen so much oil in an undeveloped area, but to advise him to have nothing to do with it."¹³ Harrison was somewhat confused until the young man pointed out that the field was fifty miles from the nearest railroad and that even if a pipeline were built to Casper and a refinery constructed in that town, there was no market for the oil in the entire Rocky Mountain region.¹⁴

Harrison had no response to Emery's comments. The young man was correct. As early as 1889 a group of investors from Pennsylvania led by Phillip M. Shannon had moved into the Salt Creek area. The Shannon group drilled and completed a number of wells on the northern edge of what became the Salt Creek field. In 1894 the investors constructed a refinery in Casper, the first in Wyoming, and in 1895, the group incorporated as the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Company. The oil from the Shannon field, as it became known, was hauled to the refinery in Casper using "string teams" (wagons loaded with barrels of oil pulled by twelve to eighteen horses). The refined product was sold to a number of railroads operating in the area for lubrication purposes. This small and limited market was all that kept the Pennsylvania Company operating. In 1904, with Wyoming's total oil production at only 7,000 barrels per year, Shannon sold his refinery and oil holdings to Joseph H. Lobell.¹⁵

By 1905 the *Wyoming Labor Journal* was asking what was wrong with Wyoming's oil industry. The *Journal* explained that there was nothing wrong with the industry in the state other than the fact that it was being controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad and, more importantly, by Standard Oil. The author of the article believed that Standard was deliberately holding down production in Wyoming until a time in the future when it would need the state's oil. The truth was that Standard had little or no interest in Wyoming's oil potential at that time. The great "octopus" had begun

loosing control of the petroleum industry several years earlier with new oil discoveries being made in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana. This resulted in the establishment of other powerful oil companies such as Gulf, Phillips Petroleum and the Texas Company. The editors of the *Wyoming Industrial Journal* could have easily answered the question, "what is the matter with Wyoming's oil industry," by reading its' own pages. The Wyoming Oil and Development Company, which had drilled a number of wells near Douglas between 1904 and 1906, was using its oil in the manufacture of a product known as "Douglas Dip." The Dip was supposed to kill parasites and the diseases they carried or caused.¹⁶ Wyoming Oil and Development could find no other local use for its oil. Young Emery's assessment of markets and transportation for oil produced in Wyoming at that time was correct.

In spite of Emery's comments on the lack of a market for Wyoming's oil in general and Salt Creek oil in particular, Harrison was not dissuaded from continuing his own work as far as making comparative analyses of geologic structures in the Big Horn Basin to those he studied at Salt Creek. Prior to leaving Salt Creek Harrison made the acquaintance of Septimus A. Lane, who was superintendent for the British-owned, International Drilling Trust, the company which the Dutch had contracted with to drill at Salt Creek.¹⁷ In

¹² Jeannie Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire: The Wiley Irrigation Project* (Cody: Yellowstone Printing and Publishing, 1990), 86.

¹³ Harrison, "Oil and Gas Prospects," 491.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 491.

¹⁵ T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 300-01. Alfred James Mokler, *History of Natrona County Wyoming 1888-1922* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1923), 245-48. Roy A. Jordan and S. Brett DeBoer, *Wyoming: A Source Book* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996), 161. Minute Book, 1-3, Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Company, Midwest Oil Company collection (MOC), Box 7, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. William T. Sullins, "The History of the Salt Creek Oil Field" (master's thesis, University of Wyoming, 1954), 1-6. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 5-12. Roberts, *Salt Creek*, 18-22.

¹⁶ "Hot Air vs. Oil Claims," *The Wyoming Industrial Journal*, July 1905, 15-16. J. Leonard Bates, *The Origins of Teapot Dome: Progressives, Parties, and Petroleum, 1909-1921* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), 16. Gerald D. Nash, *United States Oil Policy 1890-1964: Business and Government in Twentieth Century America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968), 8. Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 94-95. "Douglas, the State Fair City, Twenty Years Old and Ripe for Numerous Industries," *The Wyoming Labor Journal*, September 1909, 6.

¹⁷ Mackey, *Black Gold*, 17-18. Roberts, *Salt Creek*, 35-39.

time Lane's connections at Salt Creek would become the source of financing for Harrison's future exploration projects.

After leaving Salt Creek in late April, 1909, Harrison returned to the Big Horn Basin carrying out inspection work at Greybull and Byron. Harrison met Sid Koughan in Byron at what is known today as the Garland oil field. Koughan recently had moved rotary drilling equipment from Texas to the Garland field. When Harrison arrived at Byron, Koughan was in the process of converting his rotary rig into a standard, or cable-tool rig. Even though the discovery well at Spindletop in Texas had been brought in with rotary equipment eight years earlier, in 1901, the rotary drilling bits of the day were no match for the hard sands of the Rocky Mountain formations.¹⁸ Harrison said that "the rotary fish tail bit . . . would not cut the Cretaceous Pierre shales."¹⁹ It took the pounding of a 1,500 to 3,000-pound bit and tools of a cable-tool rig to break through the formations in the Rocky Mountains. Harrison noted that more than one drilling contractor went broke trying to use rotary equipment in Wyoming during those early years.²⁰

After leaving Byron Harrison returned to Oregon Basin where he stayed at Wiley's Cliffs Ranch and carried out further geologic studies of structures in that

area. He also spent a good deal of time with Wiley's daughter Ruth, and on July 13, 1909, became engaged to her. After leaving Oregon Basin and returning to Cheyenne, Harrison continued making comparisons of the various geological structures he had observed. He also studied the work of others who had preceded him to Oregon Basin. Geologist C. A. Fisher had mapped a portion of the Oregon Basin structure prior to 1906 while working for the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Geologist Chester W. Washburn had mentioned the oil possibilities in that area in a bulletin published in 1907.²¹ By late August of 1909 Harrison,

¹⁸ Harrison diaries for 1909, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 86-87. Yergin, 82-86. Harold F. Williamson, *The American Petroleum Industry: The Age of Energy 1899-1959* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 29-32.

¹⁹ Harrison, "Oil and Gas Prospects," 491.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 491. For an explanation of cable-tool rigs and how they operated see, Charles A. Whiteshot, *The Oil Well Driller: A History of the World's Greatest Enterprise, the Oil Industry* (Morgantown, WV: The Acme Publishing Company, 1905), 75-77. Roswell H. Johnson and L. G. Huntley, *Principles of Oil and Gas Production* (New York: James Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1916), 114-19.

²¹ Harrison diaries for 1909, THC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 33. Thomas Harrison, "The Oregon Basin Oil Field, Wyoming," 1-11, Box 24, CBC.



Field Division employees of the Government Land Office, Cheyenne, in 1908. Thomas Harrison is in the back row, standing, second from right.

in a letter to his future in-laws, said, "The State Geologist and myself have pronounced the area there (Oregon Basin) as offering unusual prospects to the seeker of oil."²²

Harrison continued his work as Mineral Inspector until early in 1910 at which time he resigned his position to marry Ruth Wiley. Thomas Harrison and Ruth Wiley were married on February 23, 1910. Following a honeymoon in Mexico City, the Harrison's returned to the Cliffs Ranch in Oregon Basin where Thomas tried his hand at farming and ranching. Though he made a concerted effort, and even went so far as to study soil samples in an attempt to improve crops, Harrison's heart was not in farming. In addition, he did not see how anyone could make a living at it.²³

While doing his best to become a farmer and rancher, Harrison was continuing to carry out his studies of the geology at Oregon Basin. He also kept abreast of what was going on outside of Wyoming. The automobile was increasing in popularity while at the same time becoming more affordable. In 1910, for the first time in history, gasoline had surpassed kerosene in total sales in the United States. Petroleum products were no longer being used primarily for illumination and as cleaning solvents and lubricants. They were becoming an important source of fuel. Not only was the automobile a factor, there was talk of converting ships and trains from coal burners to oil burners.²⁴ In spite of having no local market for oil produced in Wyoming, Harrison could see that technology was creating a global market and an increase in demand for petroleum products.

Early in 1911 Harrison contacted S. A. Lane at Salt Creek and explained the situation at Oregon Basin. The Oregon Basin anticline, he said, contained two separate domes and was approximately thirteen miles in length, running north and south, and four to five miles in width. It fell within the Townships of 50, 51 and 52, Range 100 W, and Township 51, Range 101 W. Harrison was sure that oil could be found in great quantity. However, he did not have the financial means to purchase drilling equipment and pay the number of men who would be required to carry out a major drilling program. Harrison explained to Lane that he would survey the Oregon Basin structure and locate and file placer claims if Lane would attempt to interest a company in carrying out the drilling and accepting the financial burden for the project. In return for his help, Harrison would list Lane as one of the locators and make him a partner.²⁵

During the spring of 1911 Harrison began surveying the Oregon Basin structure using his past experiences and knowledge of geology to choose what he believed would be the most promising locations to drill for oil. Though he had confidence in his abilities, Harrison had to involve S. A. Lane in the project for another reason. Harrison's own drilling experience was limited to two summers of work in Florence, Colorado, in an established field. In addition, the usefulness of geology itself was only slowly and grudgingly being accepted in the oil industry. The importance of anticlines to oil exploration was beginning to be accepted by practical oil men by the late 1800's. Most experienced oil men believed that they could locate an anticline as easily as a geologist. The few companies that did employ geologists at that time did so on a part-time basis.²⁶ Having a practical oil man like Lane as a partner or locator would give his project legitimacy in the eyes of prospective investors.

Through the spring and summer Harrison carried on his surveying work and marked his location claims across Oregon Basin. The placer mining law, under which petroleum exploration fell until the passage of the Oil and Gas Leasing Act in 1920, stated that an individual could file a claim on twenty acres of federal land. An association of eight individuals could file on 160 acres of land per claim. Harrison filed all of his Oregon Basin claims under associations made up of himself, his wife, father-in-law, a few relatives, S. A. Lane and E. Erben, the latter two being experienced oil men. Once a claim was filed, the individual or association was required to drill a well, or in lieu of drilling, timber a shaft of at least twenty feet in depth. This work was required to be of at least \$100 in value. Once a total of \$500 in improvements had been made and a commercial show of oil found, the locator could pay the \$2.50 per acre purchase price and file for patent on the land. Harrison completed his surveying and assessment work and filed his claims, covering nearly 13,000 acres in Oregon Basin, at the Park County Court House in Cody on November 17, 1911.²⁷

²² Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 87.

²³ Harrison diaries for 1910 and 1911, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 86-89.

²⁴ Yergin, 111, 152-57. Nash, *United States Oil Policy*, 4-8.

²⁵ Harrison diaries for 1911, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 87-89. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 34.

²⁶ Harrison diaries for 1911, THC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 34-35. Whiteshot, *The Oil Well Driller*, 814. Edgar Wesley Owen, *Trek of the Oil Finders: A History of Exploration for Petroleum* (Tulsa: The American Association of Petroleum Geologists, 1975), 61-64.

With Harrison busy surveying and filing claims, Lane pitched the Oregon Basin exploration idea to his employers. Though Lane had originally worked for the International Drilling Trust, when he was contacted by Harrison in 1911 he was employed by the Franco Wyoming Company at Salt Creek. This organization was made up of a group of wealthy French investors from Paris. In September of 1909 the French group purchased the bankrupt Belgian Belgo, a company that Joseph H. Lobell was involved with and had bled dry, and incorporated the new Franco Wyoming Company under the laws of the state of Delaware.²⁸ P. E. de Caplane was a chief stockholder and the treasurer of the Franco Wyoming Company. Caplane was interested in the Oregon Basin proposal and agreed to be the main source of financing for the project.²⁹

In December of 1911 S. A. Lane escorted several of the French investors to the Cliffs Ranch in Oregon Basin to meet with Harrison and go over plans for developing the field. The type and amount of equipment needed was discussed as was the money situation. All seemed to be proceeding smoothly when, during the first week of January, 1912, Mr. Philippot,

Caplane's representative in Wyoming, told Harrison he did not want to proceed with the drilling program or the ordering of equipment until he could meet with the investors in Paris. Harrison sent a telegram to Lane expressing his concern over any delays.³⁰ He did not want to insult or infuriate Philippot, but as Harrison explained to Lane, "I want someone to operate here and as soon as possible for this is a great field, I believe, and I fear someone else may come in."³¹

²⁷ Harrison diaries for 1911, THC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 2. Bates, *The Origins of Teapot Dome*, 18-19. Samuel W. Tait, *The Wildcatters: An Informal History of Oil-Hunting in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 165-66. Harrison oil claims records, Park County Court House, Cody Wyoming. *Park County Enterprise*, November 18, 1911.

²⁸ For a detailed explanation of the corporate chaos during the early years at Salt Creek, see "The French, Belgians and Dutch Arrive at Salt Creek," in Gressley's, *The Twentieth-Century American West*.

²⁹ A. C. Campbell to stockholders, December 27, 1912, Box 16, CBC. Harrison diaries for 1911 and 1912, THC. "Acquisitions of Lands in the Salt Creek Field," Box 12, CBC.

³⁰ Harrison diaries for 1911 and 1912, THC.

³¹ Harrison to Lane, January 7, 1912, Box 39, CBC.



Visitors arriving at Wiley's home called "The Cliffs" in Oregon Basin, 1910.

During the time period in which Harrison waited for word to proceed, he received his leases and permission to drill from the Commissioner of Public Lands in Cheyenne. He also located additional leases in the area and began searching for drilling equipment locally. By the end of January the French investors had chosen a new representative for the Oregon Basin project, Pierre Humbert, and wired \$2,100 to Harrison for the purchase of building materials. As mid-February approached, Harrison notified Humbert that he had spoken to a sales representative who would sell two new "23 Star" portable drilling rigs to them for \$2,400 each. These rigs, though limited to drilling only twelve to thirteen hundred feet deep, could be moved from location to location by string team. In addition to locating the rigs, Harrison and his crews had nearly completed the construction of "Camp No. 1." The camp consisted of a 10x16-foot bunk house and a 26x16-foot kitchen and dining room.³²

In late February two Star rigs had been shipped from Akron, Ohio, and two standard rigs with three steel derricks had been shipped from Pittsburgh. Most drilling operations in Wyoming in 1912 constructed wooden derricks for each well to be drilled. However, the new steel derrick could be dismantled and moved to

the next location in a short period of time. Nine storage tanks and several thousand feet of cable also had been shipped to Oregon Basin. Harrison placed an order for casing and sent an application to the State Engineer's Office in Cheyenne for permission to expand the size of the nearby Sage Creek Reservoir.³³ Water was a necessity in drilling wells. It was used in the drilling process to remove debris from the hole and to supply the boilers of steam engines which powered the rigs. With plans to run four rigs simultaneously, the current capacity of the reservoir was insufficient.

On March 14, 1912, Harrison received \$2,500 to cover additional expenses. It was also on that date that six of the storage tanks arrived. Two days later one of the Star rigs arrived in Cody; the second followed two days later.³⁴ With the arrival of new equipment and funds, Harrison was getting anxious to begin drilling. He told Lane, "We have moved the contents of the first

³² Hopkins to Harrison, January 16, 1912; Harrison to Lane, January 27, 1912; Harrison to Humbert, February 5, 1912, Box 39, CBC.

³³ Humbert to Harrison, February 26, 1912; Harrison to Lane, March 2, 1912; Harrison to Humbert, March 7, 1912; Humbert to Harrison, March 7, 1912, Box 39, CBC.

³⁴ Harrison to Humbert, March 10, 1912; Harrison to Lane, March 14, 1912, Box 39, CBC.



Thomas Harrison (third from left) poses with drilling crew at Oregon Basin, 1912.

three cars to the ranch. The boys and horses have worked under the very worst conditions--in storms, zero weather and snow, but have done the work without much kicking and without undue urging on my part."³⁵ The weather was all that was holding Harrison back.

By April they began hiring drilling crews. Drillers would be paid five dollars per day plus board and tool dressers four dollars a day plus board. Harrison had received a power of attorney from the other locators in his associations of eight so that he could sign leases with the French investors when the time came. He would also have to refile the claims he posted at the county court house in Cody the previous year because it had been more than five months since the original filing and no drilling had yet taken place. Once the drilling program was under way it would be a busy season. Discovery wells containing a commercial show of oil would have to be drilled on every claim filed. For that reason, Lane informed Harrison, Humbert wanted to run two towers on both of the Star rigs and the two standard rigs.³⁶

Toward the end of April Harrison was eager to get started, however, rain and snow had kept his roads in a constant state of disrepair. It had been impossible to haul water to the drilling locations by wagon. With the passing of more time and no change in the weather, Harrison and his men began laying water lines from Sage Creek Reservoir to the drilling locations. One of the Star rigs was able to begin drilling on April 25, 1912. Three days later, on April 28, there was a show of oil on the Hallene well at a depth of 236 feet.³⁷ Two deep test wells were to be drilled once the standard rigs, drilling tools and crews arrived in the field.

During the early summer months Harrison was made manager of the French operation at Oregon Basin. By late June the first standard rig arrived and on July 15 on the SW quarter of Section 32, Township 51 N., Range 100 W., the McMahon well, the first deep test, was spudded in. A short time later, Caplane arrived at Oregon Basin to inspect the operation he was financing. Harrison and Caplane went over the field and the paper work pertaining to the project. Noting that discovery wells had been drilled and affidavits filled out attesting to the presence of oil, Harrison refiled his original eighty claims at the Park County Court House in Cody.³⁸

As drilling continued on the McMahon well, Caplane and his family toured Yellowstone Park. On August 22, at a depth of 1,305 feet drilling on the McMahon well was halted due to a large flow of gas estimated at approximately 10,000,000 cubic feet per

day. Three days later Caplane and his family returned from Yellowstone as the driller, Hesslin, at the McMahon location was trying to push through the gas bearing strata. The day's drilling resulted in deepening the well by only three feet as the gas blew rocks and dirt fifty feet into the air. Caplane wanted the well capped and a new well drilled at another location. The drilling was stopped. Harrison was disappointed. He noted in his report that they had succeeded in penetrating only the first seventy-five feet of the gas bearing sand. Harrison believed there was another 150 feet in the strata and that the bottom thirty feet was the most promising as far as oil was concerned.³⁹

Harrison met with C. M. Edgett, his assistant manager in the field, and driller Hesslin to discuss the possibility of deepening the McMahon well. Much to the relief of the drilling crew, Hesslin decided he could not drill the well any deeper. During the last days of August Harrison and Edgett made a number of geological studies to determine where the next deep well should be drilled. A site was chosen on the southeast quarter of Section 5, Township 51 N., Range 100 W., on what was known as the Pauline claim. Work began in early September in preparation for drilling. In the mean time, with the McMahon discovery, management felt that all claims should be clearly posted with affidavits of discovery affixed to the corner posts.⁴⁰

On September 4, 1912, the French investors filed articles of incorporation for the Enalpac Oil and Gas Company in Cheyenne. Enalpac (the reverse spelling of Caplane) established its main office in Casper where other companies owned by the French group (Wyoming Oil Fields Company, Natrona Pipe Line and Refining Company and Franco Wyoming Oil Company) were located. The president of Enalpac was Cheyenne attorney Charles W. Burdick. Vice-president was Casper attorney A. C. Campbell with W. D. Waltman serving as the manager of all the French

³⁵ Harrison to Lane, March 18, 1912, Box 39, CBC.

³⁶ Lane to Harrison, April 9, 1912, Box 39, CBC.

³⁷ Harrison to Lane, April 25, 1912; Harrison to Humbert, April 26, 1912, Box 39, CBC. Drilling record for 1912, Box 12, CBC.

³⁸ Harrison diaries for 1912, THC. Victor Ziegler, "The Oregon Basin Gas and Oil Field," Bulletin No. 15, State Geologist's Office, 1917, 236. Records of the County Clerk, Park County Court House.

³⁹ Harrison to Waltman, August 26 and 31, 1912, Box 25, CBC. C. M. Edgett diary for August 1912, THC. Thomas Harrison diaries for 1912, THC.

⁴⁰ Harrison to Waltman, August 31 and September 7, 1912, Box 25, CBC.

owned companies in Wyoming. Two months earlier, in July, the Overland Oil Company had been incorporated and was operating in Oregon Basin. Overland Oil was also financed by Caplane and his French partners.⁴¹

By late September the McMahon well was leaking badly after being temporarily plugged a month earlier. With his other drillers busy on the Pauline well, and unsure of how to deal with the McMahon well, Harrison hired his acquaintance from Byron, Sid Koughan, to run casing in the McMahon well and cap it. Koughan had experience with gas wells in Texas and Louisiana and with the help of his two assistants, he was able to seal the McMahon well by early October. In the meantime Harrison was having problems with the Pauline well and his drillers. One driller, McCune, left Oregon Basin in September and on October 14 Harrison fired driller O. L. Long for insubordination and unsatisfactory work. Long had relied heavily on the experience of McCune and with the latter gone, Long's incompetence became apparent.⁴²

Harrison was wishing he had made more of an effort to keep McCune at Oregon Basin. McCune knew his job and the men worked well for him. Harrison hired another driller named Mills in late October, but Mills had not drilled for five years and being from the South, could not handle the weather or the altitude. In addition, he refused to work with driller Hesslin. On October 20 Harrison contacted Koughan to see if he could borrow some tools to fish a bit out of the hole at the Pauline well. Koughan did not have the proper tools but said he would build what was required. Harrison left driller Hesslin in Cody to help Koughan. Instead of helping Koughan, Hesslin went to several of the bars in Cody and got drunk. He was fired on October 23.⁴³

With unrest among the men and the hiring of two new drillers, Holmes and Williams from Casper, in addition to problems with the Pauline well, Harrison had been required to spend nearly four weeks at the drilling site. The problems with the Pauline well, caving, filling with water and lost tools, had resulted in unforeseen expenses. Caplane put a ceiling on expenses for Enalpac operations at \$5,000 per month. On average, expenses had only been \$3,800 to \$4,000 each month but the existing problems had nearly doubled that for the month of October, and November looked no better.⁴⁴ Harrison knew that there was oil at Oregon Basin, but by November of 1912, he had to be wondering if it was worth continuing.

December proved to be a better month than the previous two. Harrison was happy with the work of his

two new drillers. A survey map of the Oregon Basin field listing all of the locations and claims was nearing completion. The corner posts for all of the claims had been put in with the name of each claim being painted on those posts, and discovery notices had been placed at all of the discovery wells drilled during the previous months. And in spite of problems, the Pauline well reached a depth of 1,725 by Christmas eve. With the situation apparently improving, Harrison left Oregon Basin to visit family members in Indiana.⁴⁵

Though most other drilling operations in Wyoming had already been halted due to the cold weather, C. M. Edgett, managing operations in Harrison's absence, was trying to complete the Pauline well prior to shutting down for the season. Cold weather and storms were slowing operations to a near standstill. On January 5, 1913, the temperature dropped to sixteen below zero. Water lines to the boiler were freezing and drilling was restricted to one daylight tower. On the ninth the crew ran casing with the well blowing water thirty feet above the floor. By January 21, the well reached a depth of 2,190 feet. The tool dresser was sick and laid up in Cody, the cook had been in town drunk for a week and was passing bad checks, but the rest of the crew proceeded with the work at hand. On January 28 work was halted as the well continued to blow water on the men.⁴⁶

Oil-skin clothing arrived for the crew from Cody in early February and the work on the Pauline well resumed. It was decided to fill the hole in back up to a depth of 1,760 feet where an oil bearing sand had been encountered. The crew spent two and one-half days dumping rocks into the well and pounding them down with the drilling tools, but they seemed to disappear. Returning from Indiana, Harrison ordered a joint of casing to be filled with concrete. Once it had set up the casing was lowered to the bottom of the hole and

⁴¹ Campbell to Burdick, December 27, 1912 and Burdick to Campbell, February 1, 1913, Box 16, CBC. Enalpac articles of incorporation, Box 39, CBC. *Park County Enterprise*, July 3, 1912.

⁴² Harrison to Waltman, October 5 and October 12, 1919, Box 25, CBC.

⁴³ Harrison to Waltman, October 19 and October 26, 1912, Box 25, CBC.

⁴⁴ Harrison to Waltman November 2 and November 9, 1912, Box 25, CBC. Waltman to Caplane, November 30, 1912, Box 21, CBC.

⁴⁵ Harrison to Waltman, December 4, 11 and 26, 1912, Box 25, CBC. Harrison diaries for 1912, THC.

⁴⁶ Edgett to Waltman, January 1, 14, 21 and 28, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

pounded down. Again, several loads of rock were dumped into the well. Finally the bottom seemed to be solid. The crew spent three days running the casing because the well continued to blow water which froze to the men and their oil skin clothing. Driller Knox said that he had never worked in such adverse conditions in his life, but in spite of situation, the work was completed. Unfortunately, once the string of casing was on the bottom, it settled twelve feet below the desired depth.⁴⁷

The casing was again pulled and rocks dumped into the well. When the bottom seemed solid, the casing was run again. This time it did not settle. In spite of this minor success, Harrison stopped all work at the Pauline site because water continued to blow from the well and freeze to the men and equipment causing a number of accidents. The crew did maintenance work on the star rigs and ran guy wires from the steel derricks on the McMahon and Pauline wells to anchors to prevent them from being blown over by strong winds which seemed to have settled over the area.

In the meantime Harrison contacted Waltman about possible claim jumpers. A number of "scouts" had been in Oregon Basin looking over the area throughout the winter months.⁴⁸ Harrison was doing all he could to protect the field and in spite of the problems faced, told Waltman, "I am very enthusiastic over the character of the oil and the excellent prospects our two deep wells have shown us existed."⁴⁹

Harrison's concern over the possibility of claim jumpers was echoed by the management in Casper. Waltman ordered many of the shallow discovery wells deepened to insure a good show of oil. The crews were thus occupied with drilling deeper discovery wells and trying to control the increasing flow of gas from the Pauline well. But the nervousness over claim jumpers continued when Harrison saw a Mr. Morrison of the Midwest company wandering through the field. He was also concerned with correspondence being carried out between one of his drillers, Mr. Elsea, and Jack McFadyen. McFadyen was the superintendent in charge of the Ohio Oil Company's operations in Wyoming. Though the Ohio was not producing oil in Wyoming at that time, as a former member of the Standard Oil family, their interest caused worry.⁵⁰

The lack of an important oil find at Oregon Basin was becoming a point of concern for Caplane and the other Enalpac investors. Caplane, along with D. A. Ehrlich and W. D. Waltman arrived in Cody on July 17, 1913, to investigate the field for themselves. After viewing the McMahon and Pauline wells, Caplane informed

Harrison that he had retained the services of the eminent Italian geologist, Cesare Porro, to conduct a thorough study of Oregon Basin. Caplane also made Harrison vice-president of Enalpac and appointed him as the company's geologist. For this Harrison was to be paid \$250 per month. In addition, Harrison was retained as consulting geologist by the Franco Wyoming Company, another Caplane interest, at a fee of \$100 a month and thirty dollars per day expenses when working in the field.⁵¹

Dr. Porro arrived at Oregon Basin on August 4 and set up residence at the Cliffs Ranch. On the fifth and sixth, Harrison gave Porro a tour of the field and the two geologists examined the McMahon and Pauline well logs. The following day Porro told Harrison he would rather examine the field alone in order to form his own opinion. Porro tramped through the field by himself for more than a week and on August 23, informed Caplane that Oregon Basin had some good points and bad points. The good was the structural dome; the bad was a lack of oil in any of the croppings of formations in which Enalpac was drilling. Porro urged the drilling of three or four more deep test wells at points he would designate, but felt that the field would never be a large producer.⁵²

While Porro was making his assessment of the field, Harrison was occupied with other projects. He recently completed formal leasing agreements between himself and his fellow locators and Enalpac Oil and Gas, Overland Oil and Development and the Imperial Oil Company, the latter two being wholly owned subsidiaries of Enalpac. This agreement, coupled with the fact that Harrison and his locators had received patents on four quarter sections and one slightly smaller tract, (the patented land was the NW quarter of Sec. 5, T. 51 N, R. 100 W, SE quarter of Sec. 5, T. 51 N, R. 100 W, SW quarter of Sec. 29, T. 51 N, R. 100 W, NW quarter of Sec. 30, T. 51 N, R. 100 W and the SW quarter of Sec. 32, T. 51 N, R. 100 W) resulted in the

⁴⁷ Edgett to Waltman, February 5, 1913; Harrison to Waltman, January 18, February 12 and 18, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

⁴⁸ Harrison to Waltman, February 23 and 25, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

⁴⁹ Harrison to Waltman, March 20, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

⁵⁰ Harrison to Waltman, March 11, April 2 16, 1913, Box 39, CBC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 51. Hartzell Spence, *Portrait in Oil: How the Ohio Oil Company Grew to Become Marathon* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1962), 23, 45, 70-71.

⁵¹ Harrison to Waltman, July 22, 1913, Box 39, CBC. Memorandum of Agreement, July 1913, Box 25, CBC.

⁵² Harrison to Waltman, August 7, 8, 12, 19 and 26, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

incorporation of the Oregon Basin Oil & Gas Company, a business dealing solely with oil leases. Lane was named president of the company with Harrison, Lane and Casper attorney A. C. Campbell serving as the board of directors. The articles of incorporation were filed in Cheyenne on November 13, 1913.⁵³

With a solid lease agreement for himself and his locators and no major oil discovery in Oregon Basin, Harrison began to look for other possibilities. He located claims in the Little Buffalo Basin area eleven miles south of Meeteetse and at Grass Creek, another thirteen miles south of Little Buffalo Basin. The claims were filed in October, 1913, at the court houses in Park and Hot Springs counties. Harrison believed both fields had potential and took Dr. Porro to inspect Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin once he had finished his report on Oregon Basin.⁵⁴

Following the completion of his report on Oregon Basin, Porro chose a site on the SW quarter of Sec. 29, T. 51 N, R. 100 W for the drilling of the next deep test well. On September 3 one crew and the teamsters began moving a steel derrick and drilling equipment to Porro's site, known as the Hallene location, so that drilling could begin at the earliest possible date. With the crew involved in moving equipment and rigging up to drill, Harrison and Porro spent two weeks looking over Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin to determine the oil prospects at those locations.⁵⁵ By late September Harrison left Porro in Casper, where the two had been examining the Salt Creek field, and returned to Oregon Basin to superintend the drilling of the Hallene well.

Drilling on the Hallene well began on October 6, 1913. By November 17 the well was near 1,300 feet deep but the hole was showing signs of going crooked. Rock had been placed in the well and drilled out in an effort to straighten the hole. The driller even put cast iron down the well and drilled it out, but to no avail. After a week with no success, a five foot piece of eight inch pipe was placed in the hole to be drilled up, but it disappeared altogether. Finally, after inserting and drilling up an eight-foot-long piece of eight-inch pipe, the hole was straightened. On December 9 the well was down 1,457 feet and was flowing in excess of 5,000,000 cubic feet of gas per day. The following week the gas flow had increased to 6.5 million cubic feet. Harrison was upset at the waste of gas, but with orders from Casper, he continued drilling.⁵⁶

By mid-December the well was 1,515 feet deep. It was caving badly and the flow of gas had increased. Harrison again urged Waltman to cap the well to

prevent waste. At that point gas had been the only product appearing in great quantity at Oregon Basin. The property value depended entirely on the gas. The flow of gas from the Hallene well had reached nearly 7,000,000 cubic feet per day and had been flowing at that rate for two weeks. In addition, freezing weather made it nearly impossible to supply water to the boiler for the rig's steam-powered engine. Waltman finally gave in and agreed to cap the well. On Christmas eve casing was run to the bottom of the hole and by December 26 the well was capped.⁵⁷

With the capping of the Hallene well, Enalpac operations were closed down at Oregon Basin until spring. For Harrison, the year 1913 had ended on much the same note as 1912. After nearly three years of work and a large expenditure of money, Enalpac had three good gas wells but had made no significant oil discovery. Harrison spent January and February of 1914 reconsidering his claims at Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin. It was also during those months that he located and filed claims in Elk Basin, approximately twenty-five miles northeast of the Cliffs Ranch. The Elk claims, as they were called, were filed at the County Court House in Cody on March 12, 1914.⁵⁸

Harrison also made a trip through Badger Basin, approximately thirty miles north of the Cliffs ranch, in the early months of 1914 and examined that structure. He determined that the Frontier formation in that area was in excess of 4,000 feet deep and not worth locating. His observations proved true as the discovery well at Badger Basin was not drilled until 1931 and was 8,723 feet deep (that well was a world record for a cable tool rig at that time). By early March Harrison completed his reports on Elk Basin, Little Buffalo Basin and Grass

⁵³ Mackey, *Black Gold*, 36. Lease agreement between Oregon Basin Oil and Gas Company and Enalpac Oil and Gas Company, 1, Box 367, Warwick Downing Collection (WDC), American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. *Wyoming Tribune*, November 19, 1913.

⁵⁴ Harrison diaries for 1913, THC. Records of the County Clerk, Park County Court House, Cody, Wyoming. Thomas Harrison, "Cesare Porro (1865-1940)" in *The Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists*, August 1952, 1684. Roberts, *Salt Creek*, 104-05.

⁵⁵ Harrison to Waltman, September 2, 9 and 19, 1913, Box 39, CBC. Harrison diaries for 1913, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 88-89.

⁵⁶ Harrison to Waltman, October 8, November 26, December 9 and 14, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

⁵⁷ Harrison to Waltman, December 21 and 31, 1913, Box 39, CBC.

⁵⁸ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Records of the County Clerk, Park County Court House.

Creek sending them off to the Midwest Refining Company in Casper in an effort to interest them in drilling those three fields.⁵⁹

In the meantime Waltman, Enalpac's corporate manager, was looking for a market for the Oregon Basin gas. He met C. A. de Saulles, of the American Smelting and Refining Company, at Crawford, Nebraska. The two men went to Oregon Basin to examine the wells. American Smelting, according to de Saulles, would consider building a zinc smelter in Cody if, in addition to a good gas supply, top quality coal and clay deposits also could be found in the area. Such a smelter would consume approximately 7,000,000 cubic feet of gas per day. The gas wells impressed de Saulles who forwarded his report to Mr. Newhouse, the vice-president of American Smelting. Unfortunately, as Waltman soon learned, the zinc smelting industry was suffering from over production and losing money.⁶⁰

The drilling crews returned to Oregon Basin in March of 1914, and worked on completing the Hallene well through mid-May. Harrison, in the meantime, grew disillusioned with the Enalpac operation and resigned as president and Oregon Basin field superintendent in May. D. A. Ehrlich took Harrison's place as field manager. Harrison accepted a position as consulting geologist for the Midwest Refining Company. He was to be Midwest's on-site consultant for drilling operations at Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin. The company had approved Harrison's exploration suggestions concerning those structures.⁶¹

On May 9, 1914, President Wilson issued a second withdrawal order. The order stated that approximately 85,000 acres of federal land in Big Horn, Park, Washakie and Hot Springs counties was to be withdrawn from future oil exploration. The original withdrawal order came on September 27, 1909 and was issued by President Taft. At that time conservationists like Gifford Pinchot were concerned that the increased use of petroleum for automobiles and the conversion of ships and trains from coal to oil, would result in too great of a demand on the country's petroleum reserves. However, it was stipulated that any land claimed or drilled prior to the issuing of the order belonged to the claimants and could be explored. For that reason some lands in Oregon Basin and other fields in northwest Wyoming targeted by the withdrawal order were not affected.⁶²

In June of 1914, with the outbreak of World War I in Europe, Harrison's decision to leave Enalpac was further justified. During the late summer Germany

invaded France and P. E. de Caplane was wounded in one of the early battles. With France at war, Caplane's investment capital in the Oregon Basin operation quickly dwindled. Though several more deep test wells would be drilled in that field, Harrison focused on exploration at Grass Creek and Little Buffalo Basin.⁶³

When Harrison arrived at Grass Creek in late April of 1914 to take care of drilling equipment being sent by the Midwest company, he found that he was not alone. The Orchard and Worland group, backed by Valentine of California, had jumped Harrison's claims. Worland's men were armed and intended to keep everyone else out of the field. Harrison apprised Midwest company officials of the situation and they brought in their own armed men. Valentine and Midwest officials reached an agreement in time to avoid a gun battle.⁶⁴

Actual possession of a field was often more important than paper claims. Historian Hartzell Spence described oil claims best when he stated, "the man who made his Placer Act claims stick was the one who could dig in, hang on, and, if necessary, shoot back."⁶⁵

In late June of 1914, the discovery well at Grass Creek was brought in on the NE quarter of Section 18. It was a fifty-barrel per day well and produced a light paraffin oil from the Frontier formation. It was not long before the Ohio and the Midwest company were both drilling at Grass Creek. After Harrison had filed his Grass Creek claims he organized the Grass Creek Oil and Gas Company with S. A. Lane as president. This was a leasing company based along the same lines as the Oregon Basin Oil and Gas Company. Lane leased the Grass Creek claims to both the Midwest and the

⁵⁹ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 88-89. United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Bulletin 418, "Petroleum and Natural Gas Fields in Wyoming," 10-12. Thomas Harrison, "Geology Report for the Midwest Oil Company," 1920, 15, THC.

⁶⁰ Waltman to Caplane, March 13, 27 and April 25, 1914, Box 21, CBC.

⁶¹ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Waltman to Caplane, May 18, 1914. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 89.

⁶² Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Waltman to Caplane, May 27, 1914, Box 21, CBC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 23-24. Roberts, *Salt Creek*, 53-55. Bates, *The Origins of Teapot Dome*, 22. Gressley, *The Twentieth-Century American West*, 70.

⁶³ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Waltman to Caplane, October 23, 1914, Box 21, CBC.

⁶⁴ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Cook, *Wiley's Dream of Empire*, 89. Ellen Sue Blakey, "Wild West Wyoming" in *Oil on Their Shoes: Petroleum Geology to 1918* (Tulsa: The American Association of Petroleum Geologists, 1985).

⁶⁵ Spence, *Portrait in Oil*, 66.

Ohio. During the next few years more than 300 wells were drilled in that field.⁶⁶

On September 29, 1914, Ed N. Harrison was born at the Cliffs Ranch in Oregon Basin. Thomas Harrison was doing survey work and preparing to drill at Little Buffalo Basin at the time. In November of 1914 gas was discovered in the Frontier formation on the NW quarter of Section 2. Though it was an important discovery and several more wells were drilled, Little Buffalo Basin remained a gas producing field until the late 1930's.⁶⁷

By the close of 1914 the war in Europe had led French investors in oil exploration in Wyoming to further cut financing of those projects. As a result Harrison's employment as a geologist by Enalpac and the Franco Wyoming was terminated.⁶⁸ In spite of that, his reputation with the Midwest company was growing and he had made several important discoveries at Little Buffalo Basin and Grass Creek. Harrison's future as a petroleum geologist was looking up.

In 1915 Harrison was carrying out geological surveys for the Midwest company in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Oklahoma. During this period he continued to urge Midwest to drill at Elk Basin. By the summer of 1915 Midwest agreed. The company engaged the services of driller Gustave O.

Forsman and the Elk Basin discovery well was brought in on October 8, 1915, in the Frontier formation. Initial production was approximately 150 barrels per day but as the result of a legal injunction caused by claim disputes, the well was capped. Once the legal disputes were resolved, over the next year and one-half more than forty wells were drilled at Elk Basin. When the discovery was made the Midwest and Ohio moved quickly to exploit the field.⁶⁹

Harrison's reputation as geologist continued to grow. In January of 1916, as a result of his suggestions to drill

at Grass Creek and Elk Basin, the Midwest Refining Company promoted Harrison to Chief Geologist. His salary was \$5,000 per year with an additional rate of fifty dollars per day whenever he was in the field. The promotion was impressive considering that most oil companies did not have geology departments at that time. In February Harrison left northwest Wyoming and moved his family to Denver, the Midwest company headquarters.⁷⁰

Harrison resigned from the Midwest company in 1920. He worked as an independent consultant, becoming one of the most highly respected geologists in the Rocky Mountain region. It is likely that Harrison's greatest regret was not finding oil at Oregon

Basin, the field where he started his career in the oil industry, and the field he knew would be a great petroleum producer.

After Harrison left Enalpac, that company stagnated. A few more gas wells were drilled but the owners lost interest. In 1920, as a result of the enactment of the Oil and Gas Leasing Act, Enalpac lost control of the Oregon Basin field. Due to Enalpac's inactivity the majority of the field was leased to others. In 1926 the Ohio Oil Company hired Paul Stock Drilling



Harrison Collection

Thomas Harrison, Consulting Geologist, 1929.

⁶⁶ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. Harrison well logs and drilling reports for Grass Creek, 1914, THC. "Petroleum and Natural Gas

Fields in Wyoming," 37-39. Thomas Harrison, "Grass Creek Dome, Hot Springs County, Wyoming," *Structure of Typical American Oil Fields*, Vol. II, 1929. David Dickey suite, Grass Creek, Box 16, CBC.

⁶⁷ Harrison diaries for 1914, THC. "Petroleum and Natural Gas Fields in Wyoming," 54-55.

⁶⁸ Burdick to Waltman, December 19, 1914 and Burdick to Harrison, December 17, 1914, Box 25, CBC.

⁶⁹ Harrison diaries for 1915, THC. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 54. "Petroleum and Natural Gas Fields in Wyoming," 27-28. Richard W. Heasler Jr., "Gustave O. Forsman and the Discovery of Badger Basin Oil," (Unpublished Paper, May 1997), 19-24, 40.

⁷⁰ Harrison diaries for 1916 and 1917, THC.

to put down a well in Oregon Basin. Stock, using new improved drill bits, brought in a rotary rig and was able to drill down and "mud off" the gas bearing sand which had plagued Enalpac for so many years. On February 1, 1927, oil was discovered in the Embar sand at a depth of 3,354 feet.⁷¹ Harrison was right about Oregon Basin's potential. It is the third largest producing field in Wyoming's history. To date it has produced more than 440 million barrels of oil and 212 billion cubic feet of gas.

Thomas Harrison played an important role in the discovery of oil in northwest Wyoming. His story is indicative of many of those "rugged individuals" who came west to tame the frontier. Though he possessed the knowledge required and demonstrated a willingness to work hard, it was not enough. He still required the financing and technology of major corporations and approval of the federal government to use the land to succeed. Though he made important contributions to

the discovery of oil in Northwest Wyoming and went on to become one of the most highly regarded petroleum geologists in the Rocky Mountain region, Thomas Harrison failed to realize his dream of controlling and producing the Oregon Basin oil field.

⁷¹ General Land Office to Enalpac, July 22, 1920, Box 23, CBC. *Billings Gazette*, June 28, 1928, 4. Mackey, *Black Gold*, 42-43.

Mike Mackey is an independent historian living in Powell. He has published a number of articles and books dealing with various aspects of Wyoming history. The author would like to thank the University of Wyoming's Bernard Majewski Fellowship for a grant to research and write this paper.

Letters to the Editor

Another Origin for the Phrase?

Editor:

As usual I enjoy the *Annals of Wyoming* and especially the last issue which had the Jordan auto ad. Being an old car buff of sorts, I have a reproduction of it framed on our wall.

"Somewhere West of Laramie" is a real catchy phrase. I liked it better when our famous Wyoming train bandit (Bill Carlisle) used it a few years before the Jordan ad.

I am enclosing an excerpt out of his book, *The Lone Bandit*.

Sincerely,
Paul Canoso, Diamondville

Excerpt from *Bill Carlisle, Lone Bandit*, p. 147:

"A woman and her daughter had the room directly above me and during the week I became acquainted with them. Together we talked and laughed over the letter which appeared on the front page of the Denver Post and which was worded as follows:

Denver Post:

To prove that this letter is the real thing, I am enclosing a watch-chain which I took from the last hold-up out of Cheyenne--this chain can easily be identified.

To convince the officers that they have the wrong men in jail, I will hold up a train somewhere west of Laramie, Wyoming.

(signed) The White Masked Bandit"

Comment on "Project Wagon Wheel"

Editor:

....[Project Wagon Wheel: A Nuclear Plowshare for Wyoming] was an interesting account and Adam [Lederer] certainly covered the Plowshare history well and laid a good foundation for the Wagon Wheel project....

Sincerely,
Sally Mackey, Pinedale

Recent Acquisitions in the Hebard Collection, UW Libraries

Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert, University of Wyoming Libraries

The Grace Raymond Hebard Wyoming Collection is a branch of the University of Wyoming Libraries housed in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room in the American Heritage Center. Primarily a research collection, the core of this collection is Miss Hebard's personal library which was donated to the university libraries. Further donations have been significant in the development of this collection. While it is easy to identify materials about Wyoming published by nationally known publishers, it can be difficult to locate pertinent publications printed in Wyoming. The Hebard Collection is considered to be the most comprehensive collection on Wyoming in the state.

If you have any questions about these materials or the Hebard Collection, you can contact me by phone at 307-766-6245; by email, thert@uwyo.edu or you can access the Hebard HomePage at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>.

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Wyoming Pictures



Nellie Tayloe Ross (1876-1977) is shown riding a camel (right) on a trip to the Pyramids in Egypt. The other camel is ridden by her grandson David. Ross, the first woman elected governor of any state when she won election in Wyoming in 1924, served as director of the United States Mint in Philadelphia from 1933 to 1953. She was the first woman named to that post. The camel tenders posing proudly are not identified in this photograph from the Nellie Tayloe Ross collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

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